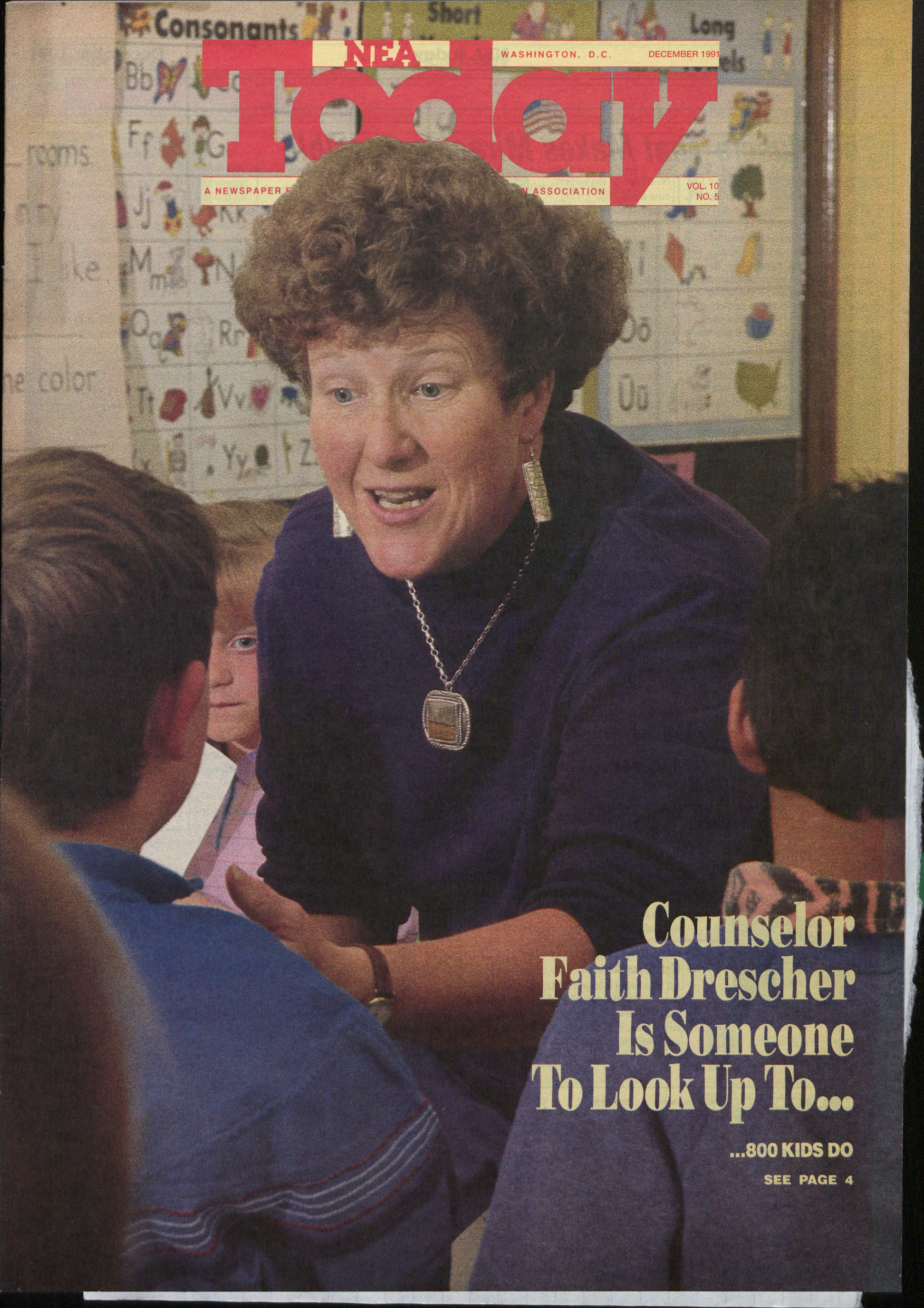




Counselor Faith Drescher Is Someone To Look Up To...

...800 KIDS DO

SEE PAGE 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

The Muscle That Makes Miracles Possible

The year was 1987, the place Los Angeles. Mary Hatwood Futrell, your NEA president at that time, came before our annual Representative Assembly with a special request.

Mary spoke eloquently. And as always, she put her faith in you, in your capacity to rise to every challenge and to see hope where others see hardship.

Mary recalled the 1985 creation of NEA's Dropout Prevention Program (formerly Operation Rescue). She noted that this action proved, one more time, that while others provide rhetorical placebos, NEA provides tangible programs. This initiative had become, in just two years, the most imaginative and most effective, the most accepted and most imitated anti-dropout effort in America. At its core were fresh and exciting local projects developed by NEA members.

All these projects had been funded through NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE). In 1987, Mary urged your 8,500 RA delegates to think of the wonders NFIE could fund if it had greater resources at its command. She then asked that NEA earmark—exclusively for NFIE—one dues dollar per member per year for five years. This investment would soon make

NFIE one of the largest education grant-giving foundations in America.

Mary then added: "We don't need miracles in education, we need muscle."

In fact, NFIE has given us both. NFIE muscle makes classroom miracles possible. Today, NEA members are shaping the destiny of American education. NFIE grants have helped our colleagues become America's foremost architects of reform.

NFIE's philosophy rests on one simple idea: The improvement of education depends on the empowerment of educators. In the words of NFIE Executive Director Donna Rhodes, the Foundation represents one of the few places where "taking risks is rewarded."

Mary Leonard, a senior executive at the Council of Foundations, believes this philosophy explains the immense respect NFIE enjoys within the corporate community. Leonard says that NFIE has increased public confidence in our schools by investing in teachers as



NEA President
Keith Geiger

agents of change.

The strongest of the many strong accolades NFIE receives come from your colleagues—from the beneficiaries of NFIE programs.

Project CARE, the brainchild of a group of Association members in the Ysleta school district in Texas, is designed to reach children long before they even near the time they can legally drop

out of school.

Gloria Barragan, the classroom teacher who directs this 12-school early intervention project, calls it a "god-send." And it all started with a two-year NFIE grant of \$30,000.

In 1989, William Mittlefehldt created a new social studies unit for his students at Anoka (Minn.) Senior High School. Using sophisticated databases, students drafted strategies to promote Minnesota's economic development. A year later, Mittlefehldt and his students entered into a long-range fiscal planning project with the Anoka mayor and the city council.

The catalyst for all this? Mittlefehldt says the breakthrough came during the summer of 1990, when NFIE financed his trip to a technology conference in San Francisco.

Carol Stumbo of Wheelwright (Ky.) High School regularly takes her students on global voyages—via technology. Her international communications network connects her students with their counterparts in Israel, Japan, Peru, and Russia.

Stumbo's experience as a member of NFIE's Christa McAuliffe Institute for Educational Pioneering helped her see the potential for restructuring schools through technology.

These few examples make it plain that we must find a way to continue support of NFIE. In future issues of NEA publications, we'll be exploring possible strategies. And we'll be outlining various ways you can help us sustain this foundation that has meant so much to so many of our members.

But for now, let me simply renew the pledge my predecessor made a little over four years ago. Back then, she said: There's a dream we can bring to life. Today, I say: The dream shall never die.

That's a promise I intend to keep. And I'll be counting on all of you to help me keep it.

Inside



9 Books Can Offer 'Avenues of Value'

Award-winning children's author Walter Dean Myers doesn't write books like the popular *Fallen Angels* just for fun or money. His books offer role models, people whom kids—especially Black kids—can look up to.

11 Who's Got Extra Time?

Not many folks in the education profession. So what do educators do when they discover how many hours school restructuring can soak up before it's even begun? War stories and survival tips.

15 Keeping Their Culture Alive

All students at a school in Kentucky's hills learn to play the dulcimer, sing Appalachian ballads, and clog dance. Keeping their culture alive? Sure, but the kids are learning academics, too.

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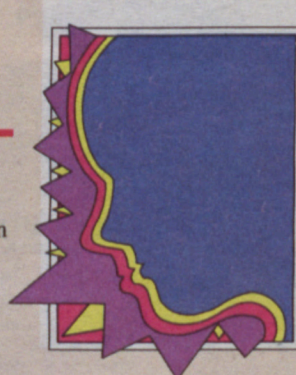
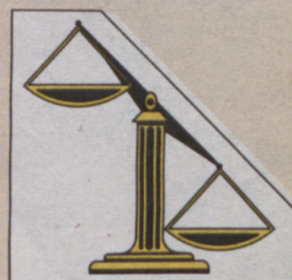
Will the new 7-2 conservative majority on the Supreme Court deny public school employees their long-established constitutional rights? Some scary predictions from NEA's Office of the General Counsel.

23 Does Heather Have The Holiday Blues?

Or is she suffering from clinical depression? A Colorado psychiatrist who specializes in adolescent depression explains the difference—and provides some insight into this far-too-common ailment.

31 Should We Pay Kids To Show Up?

Sure, says an Ohio teacher—we want them in school, and they need the money. No way, counters a New Jersey teacher—paying kids "turns the pursuit of knowledge into the pursuit of money."



Cover photograph by Rose M. Prouser

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NATIONAL NEWS



Florida's public schools have 80,000 more students this year than last—and, thanks to the state budget crunch, 8,000 fewer teachers. That leaves Joe Wilson with 42 kids in his sixth grade math class.



Illinois teacher Carol Williams exhibited true heroism when a flash flood struck during a field trip last spring. Confronting rising water, pouring rain, and falling rocks, Williams risked her life to help rescue five students swept into the flood waters.

Williams displayed heroism again a few months later when the Illinois Senate honored her courage. In her acceptance speech she told the Senators all teachers "exhibit a hushed heroism as they steadfastly endure," and encouraged them "to support public education and its heroes."



The Where-You-Stand-Depends-on-Where-You-Sit Award goes to Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin. As a U.S. Representative from Illinois, Martin supported the Family and Medical Leave Act. She even voted to override President Bush's veto.

In her new post, Martin's changed her tune. Now she's recommending that the President veto a newer, weaker leave bill.



Kudos to the U.S. Postal Service for its "America" series. The just-released airmail stamp pictured here honors the Asians who crossed the Bering Strait to what is now Alaska thousands of years before Columbus.

With 1992 just days away, it's refreshing to be reminded who discovered America first. The thanks are in the mail.



Remember ketchup as a vegetable? Here's George Bush's twist: Flight training as "education spending."

No joke. This fall, the Bush Administration claimed it's spending \$59 billion a year—more than twice the \$27 billion Ed Department budget—to reach the six national education goals.

How did Bush's count get so high? Because he's added up everything even remotely resembling education spending—including costs for flight training for military pilots.

Far more logical: child immunizations as defense spending.

Who's to Blame?

Joe Wilson's frustrated. He teaches 175 sixth graders math each day at West Ridge Middle School in Orlando, Florida.

Like a lot of other teachers caught in the worst state budget crunch in years, he's scrambling for chairs, buying his own supplies, and trying to teach.

"It's hard to get around to answering all the questions the kids ask me. I just can't give as much individual attention as I'd like.

"The crowding is bad, bad news. There's pushing and shoving in the halls, a lot of tension, lot of discipline problems. After nine weeks, I'm burned out already.

"I've been teaching at this school for 14 years, and this has been the worst budget crisis I've ever seen. In fact, this has been the worst year I've ever seen.

"At parents' night, I told the parents who showed up: 'Don't expect miracles.' They talk about excellence in education, but they're not going to get it this year. That's a fact."

Wilson's not alone in his frustration. In hundreds of communities nationwide, excellence has been put on the back burner. On the front burner: state and local budgets going up in smoke.

With state income way down—overall \$18 billion less than projected—and mandated Medicaid and prison costs way up, there's just not enough money at the state level to go around.

Despite record tax increases—during the 1991-92 budget years, the 50 states raised \$25 billion in new taxes—states still ended up cutting spending by more than \$10 billion.

Those cuts hit education hard. According to a National Governors' Association

analysis of fiscal year 1992, elementary and secondary education were allotted their smallest share of state spending in five years.

What's happening in Florida as a result is, in many ways, typical of what's happening in most states these days. Educators are going back to basics.

Not reading, writing, and arithmetic. Paper, pencils, and job security.

A hundred miles west of Orlando, in Pinellas County, budget cuts have stalled widely publicized efforts to restructure schools.

"Teachers are selling candy and doughnuts to pay for paper for the ditto machine," reports Doug Tuthill, president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association.

"We saw 122 teachers laid off this year," Tuthill says. "People are so concerned about basics like 'Am I going to have a job?' that it's hard to focus on restructuring."

"And the time and other resources that would normally be directed toward restructuring are being directed toward the budget crisis."

This fall, PCTA—and the wide array of community members and businesses that support its restructuring efforts—organized a rally to protest budget cuts. Twenty thousand people attended.

"Instead of declaring war on the school board or the superintendent or the children," Tuthill explains, "we declared war on our real enemy—the lack of revenue from the state legislature."

Right now, 80 percent of state funding for education in Florida comes from sales taxes. Decreases in tourism and consumer spending cut state income by \$622 million in just the first quarter of this fiscal year.

Above, Joe Wilson, and the hallways of West Ridge Middle School in Orlando.

That means hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to education. And the situation promises to get worse. Florida adds 350,000 new residents each year, state lottery income is way down, and there's no income tax.

The Florida Teaching Profession-NEA is pushing for a special legislative session to deal with the education funding crisis and to create a state income tax.

But it's an uphill battle in Florida—and in all 50 states. To win requires a look at the big picture, a reordering of national priorities.

"At the same time thousands of educators are laid off and class sizes are topping 40," NEA President Keith Geiger declares, "we're spending \$150 billion a year to subsidize the defense of our European allies who can well afford to defend themselves."

"America's national budget priorities reflect a world that no longer exists," Geiger says. "We've got an historic opportunity to put our children first, to invest in our communities, our people."

That's why NEA's lending considerable support to a broad-based new effort, the Campaign for New Priorities.

Backed by unions and environmental, public interest, and religious groups, the Campaign will work to build a national consensus for "getting our own house in order," Geiger says.

"NEA members like Joe Wilson," Geiger adds, "should be teaching math, not counting chairs."

—Stefanie Weiss

Look to future issues of NEA Today for regular updates on the activities of the Campaign for New Priorities at the local, state, and national levels.

COVER STORY

The Counselor's In

AND THAT MAY KEEP OUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS FROM DROPPING OUT LATER ON



It's two o'clock on a brisk fall afternoon. For Faith Drescher, it's been another busy day.

Since this morning, she's seen a young boy with behavioral prob-

lems and one who's been sexually abused. She's also helped several girls reconcile their differences after they were caught fighting and calling each other names on the playground.

She's seen a child who struggles with peer pressure, another too shy to make friends. She's held group sessions to help children of divorced parents and visited classrooms to talk about self-esteem. And still she's got parents to see, teachers to confer with, community agencies to consult.

Drescher is a modern jack-of-all-trades. Her job: elementary guidance counselor.

Every day, Faith Drescher and hundreds like her help children cope with the pressures of today's world—pressures that could make today's fifth grade students tomorrow's high school dropouts.

Surprisingly, only 12 states mandate elementary school counseling, despite evidence that early intervention by a counselor can often correct problems that, left unresolved, may drive students to school failure later on.

Even in areas that nominally provide counseling, one counselor may be responsible for as many as 1,700 students.

But support is building for federal legislation to fund elementary counselors (see box), and counselors like Drescher are making the case for such a law.

"What children face today is staggering," explains Drescher, one of 12 counselors in the Allentown (Pennsylvania) schools. "Their lives are filled with violence, drugs, abuse, fear, and anxiety. They're exposed to experiences my 16-year-old daughter never had—by the time they're in the third grade.

"I describe myself as a child advocate," adds Drescher, a 20-year counseling



Pennsylvania school counselor Faith Drescher maintains an open-door policy with students at two elementary schools.

veteran, "who lives by the three c's—coordination, consultation, and counseling. I work with three schools and 850 students, coordinating parenting programs in nearby housing projects and consulting with teachers and community agencies on the needs of students. But most of all, I'm there for the kids."

In return, the children respond to Drescher's message: talking about fears and anxieties is healthy.

One young girl seeks out a friend she knows is having problems at home. When she finds her, they head directly to Faith Drescher.

Children of divorced parents express their fears of abandonment in drawings and discussions.

A boy hits a teacher and spends the next hour with Drescher, trying to get his emotions under control.

The interaction isn't always centered on a problem, notes Drescher. "I'm here as much to share a happy moment and healthy behavior as I am to help children deal with a problem."

As a counselor, Drescher has a flexibility classroom teachers might envy. "I'm able to make home visits, work with a child who's been disruptive in class, help a community agency on a child

abuse case," says Drescher.

"Without a counselor, those things would have to be done by someone else—or not at all. And then you'd never really know what could have been done to help the child," says Drescher.

Marion Alexander became a counselor after realizing there were problems she couldn't address in her fourth grade classroom.

Today, she's a full-time counselor for

Hyde Park Elementary School in Columbia, South Carolina.

"Without counselors, we'd have many more dropouts. Not just physically, but mentally too. Then there are kids who do okay academically but have a phobia about leaving home. They develop stomachaches or headaches and have to go home early."

At Hyde Park, counseling begins in preschool and continues through the fourth and fifth grades.

"The longer I'm with the students, and the more I work with them and their parents," notes Alexander, "the more easily they're able to cope with the pressures of coming to school. They begin to seek me out rather than find ways to simply check out of the system."

Faith Drescher also plays a pivotal role with staff and parents. Recently, she and other Mosser staff established a "time-out" room where a teacher can take a student who's disrupting class.

"My role in the time-out room is to help the student relax—get the student calmed down to the point where the student can understand us and we can understand what's happening."

Teamwork—among counselors, staff, and community agencies—is the cornerstone of a comprehensive counseling program.

"Pressures on students today are so different than what they were 20 years ago when I began counseling," says Faith Drescher. "Children are literally overwhelmed. If we want to keep students from dropping out, we have to treat the whole child, and do so early."

The demands for elementary school counseling may have increased, but the number of counselors has not.

This shortage creates greater pressures on working counselors and greater demands on education workers. The situation, say some experts, is becoming critical.

Author Harriet Glossoff concurs: "If we wait until children are in middle and senior high school to address the rea-

sons behind dropout statistics, we've lost the opportunity to help them achieve their potential." Glossoff is co-author of *Children Achieving Potential*, a study showing the substantial benefits to children from elementary counseling (see sidebar for details).

For Marion Alexander and Faith Drescher, help can't come soon enough.

"When you have too many kids and not enough counselors, or no counselors at all, you find yourself deciding who you can afford to help," says Drescher. "No child should pay the price for understaffing by dropping out."

Even with a comprehensive counseling program, some students may still drop out, admit Drescher and Alexander. "You don't need an assessment instrument identify which children may drop out even after being exposed to ele-



Drescher takes a minute to confer with a teacher.



Above and at right: South Carolina school counselor Marion Alexander counsels students at Hyde Park Elementary.



COVER STORY



Above and right: Faith Drescher keeps lines of communications open, mixing in informal conferences with regular classroom visits.

Regular home visits are part of Drescher's schedule.

mentary counseling, service agencies, and special programs," says Faith Drescher. "I've watched some drop out even after we've made a massive effort to keep them in school."

—Anita Merina

A Call for Counselors

If counseling helps, why aren't there more counselors and smaller student-counselor ratios?

That question is the core of a public drive that includes congressional legislation designed to fund elementary counseling programs at specific student-counselor ratios.

The Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act, H.R. 840 in the House and S. B. 810 in the Senate, would give grants to schools to implement counseling programs. The bill sets a student-counselor ratio of 250-1.

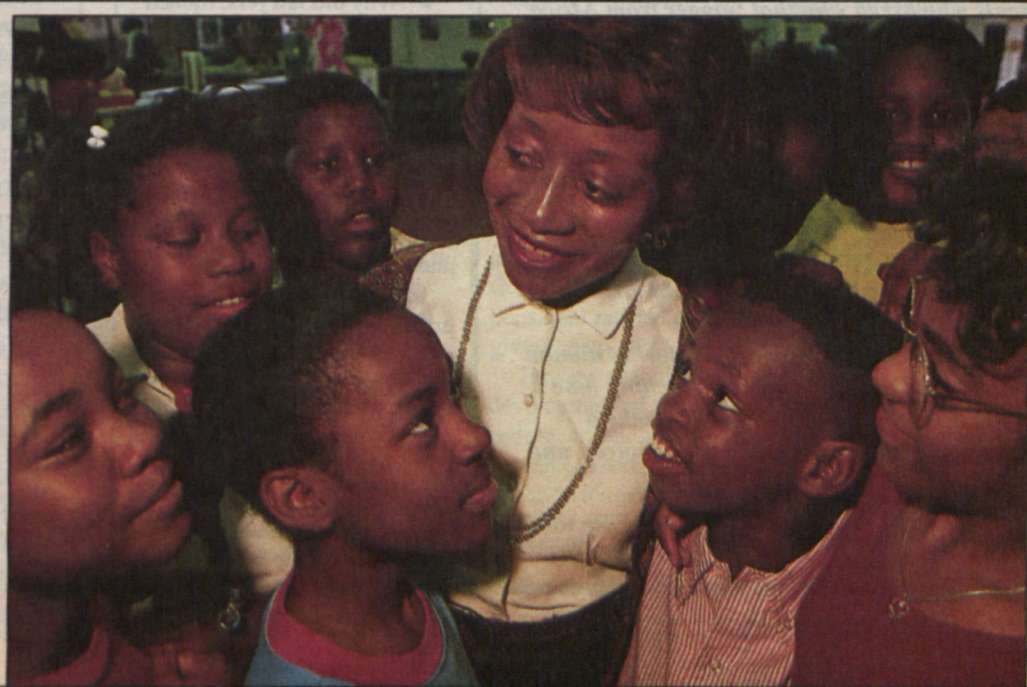
Last summer, delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly voted to endorse this bill.

Spearheading the drive for the legislation is the American Association for Counseling and Development. Last year, AACD, together with the National Conference of State Legislatures, published *Children Achieving Potential*, a report on research from the past two decades that calls elementary counseling the key to cutting dropout rates and absenteeism and increasing student achievement.

For a copy of *Children Achieving Potential*, send \$10 (plus \$1.50 for p&h) to the American Association for Counseling and Development, Order Services, 5999 Stevenson Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304.

—A.M.

Photographs by Rose M. Prouser



HUMAN RIGHTS

FACING UP!

Teachers from very different schools report how and why they're using a special curriculum, *Facing History and Ourselves*, to fight prejudice.



Jose Luis Vilgas

"Every time a colleague asks me for a concise explanation of Facing History's work, I feel like [the famous Rabbi] Hillel must have felt when he was asked to explain Judaism while standing on one foot."

"He said, 'Do nothing to others that you would not have them do to you.' This is the essence of Facing History."

—Jack Weinstein (photo above), English teacher
Milpitas (California) High School

"We have over 30 churches in our community, all of them Protestant. None of my students has ever had any Jewish friends. They have no knowledge of historical anti-Semitism. And they're very comfortable using anti-Semitic language."

"I have students who asked who that 'nigger from Africa' was the week that Nelson Mandela was set free. I have students who draw swastikas on their notebooks."

—Kim Kittle, social studies teacher,
Johnson County High School, Mountain City, Tennessee

"I have taught American history for 20 years and left out some of the most important points. I feel guilty because as a social scientist I should have been more aware. I knew, and I said nothing."

"This course makes me take a closer look at what human beings have done to one another. Whatever teaching time I have left, thanks to this program, I can start to make a difference. I must teach thinking, making wise choices, and taking responsibility."

—Minnie Warren, teacher,
Ridgeway High School, Memphis, Tennessee

A rural school with just two students of color, a big-city class with all the variety there is, a small-town course stressing community service—all using the same curriculum? It's got to be *Facing History and Ourselves*.

Facing History has helped more than 450,000 teens confront the complexities of history and ethical decision making. Over 30,000 educators have been trained in the curriculum.

Facing History takes the Nazi Holocaust and the Turkish genocide against the Armenians as case studies on citizenship, responsibility, and decision making. Its main themes—identity, conformity, power, scapegoating, peer group pressure, intolerance, and resistance—are issues that face all teenagers.

Through probing questions, the curriculum leads students to look at the choices confronting perpetrators, victims, resisters, and bystanders. A few examples:

- ▶ How is an environment of conformity and racism created?
- ▶ How does a nation move from protecting its minorities to defining them as the enemy?
- ▶ Why did doctors, nurses, and teachers, trained to care for human life, participate in the systematic dehumanization and murder of millions?
- ▶ Why did lawyers, trained to pursue justice, participate in the systematic denial of the most basic human rights?
- ▶ Why and how did some individuals defy the power of the state?
- ▶ What are the consequences to society of avoidance, denial, and distortion of history?

In using the curriculum, teachers take on the responsibility to challenge students to go beyond simple answers.

—Melissa Etlin
NEA Human and Civil Rights

For further information on the curriculum, contact: *Facing History and Ourselves* National Foundation, Inc., 25 Kennard Road, Brookline, MA 02146-7596 (phone: 617/232-1595).

WASHINGTON WATCH

America's Wake-Up Call



This fall, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) brought together the nation's top economists to discuss what America could do to end the recession and restore economic growth. Several speakers called the conference a "wake-up call" for the nation.

Recently NEA

Today staff writer Victoria Lytle spoke with EPI President Jeff Faux.

Why is the recession hanging on so long?

Partly because of the long-term decline in competitiveness that's dragged down family incomes for more than a decade.

During the 1980s, Reaganomics covered over the problem with speculation and debt. Today, bankers are afraid to lend, and consumers and businesses have already borrowed to the hilt. The federal government can't "prime the pump" with new spending because of the deficit.

At the same time, the reduction in federal investment in education, health, and infrastructure has badly eroded the finances of state and local governments.

How does U.S. investment in education and infrastructure compare internationally?

Poorly. The U.S. ranks 14th out of 16 industrialized nations in spending for grades K-12, relative to the size of their economies. Just to reach the average level of K-12 spending in the other 15 countries, the U.S. would need to spend another \$20 billion a year.

The U.S. ranks dead last in investment in training for workers. Our spending for core infrastructure is also the lowest among the industrial nations. Germany and Japan devote one-and-a-half to three times as much of their economic output to these investments as we do. Lower public investment is a major cause of the lower U.S. rate of private investment in new plants and equipment.

Can we afford to start making the domestic investments needed?

Absolutely. National security experts say the post Cold War military budget can be cut by nearly half a trillion dollars over the next decade without putting our nation in any danger. This money should go to public investment here at home.

What will happen if we as a nation don't establish new priorities?

Life is likely to get much, much tougher. Economic growth, productivity, and government revenues will keep on slowing down through the 1990s. That will cut our international competitiveness even more.

For the majority of Americans, real incomes and opportunities will continue to shrink.

Local Look

ILLINOIS

Teachers Settle 21-Day Strike

In the latest round of a 20-year test of wills, members of the Elgin Teachers Association settled their seventh strike in the past two decades. After 21 days on the picket lines, the 1,700-member local won a 6.8 percent pay raise.

"It was a long and arduous struggle for dignity," says ETA President Scott Eshelman, "but we were successful in protecting teachers' paychecks and their benefits and their rights."

Why so many strikes? Eshelman says the district has a history of bargaining through the media, asserting that administrators "know what's best for teachers and teaching and should have the final say in all matters," and underestimating the teachers and their Association.

"They don't think our leaders are representative and they don't think our members will strike," Eshelman says, "but we have teachers here who aren't afraid to stand up for what they believe in."

The district will make up all lost days in June. The one-year contract will expire in August.

ARKANSAS

Pulaski's Pride

The 950 members of the Pulaski Association of Classroom Teachers are wearing their PACT-Proud buttons and planning for ways the Association can improve teaching and learning conditions at all 37 schools in the Little Rock area. The local won bargaining rights last year, making it only the fifth site to do so in this right-to-work state.

PACT members see the passage of a millage vote in 1992 as a key goal. Past efforts have failed, but PACT leaders will be joining with district administrators and school board members in an aggressive campaign to convince voters that the schools can't do without the funds.

Asserts PACT President Betty Schrader: "We're working to strengthen the confidence of the community so that when the millage vote gets back on the ballot next October, we'll have full community support."

Another goal for the future: to win bargaining rights for the county's 1,400 ESP workers.

'TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS' IN OREGON



Classified workers in Oregon's Salem-Keizer district turned out in force to ratify their new contract, won through tough bargaining and a community-wide public relations campaign.

Salem ESP: 'Invisible' No More

The 1,100 members of the Salem-Keizer Association of Classified Employees had had enough. After working without a contract and bargaining for more than a year and a half with no settlement in sight, last June the affiliate decided to take action.

"We felt the school board and the community didn't really know about or understand the importance of our jobs to the day-to-day operation of the schools," says SKACE President Charlotte Nielsen. "Because we perform many of the behind-the-scenes functions that keep the schools running, it occurred to us that we were 1,100 invisible people."

The members of Oregon's largest ESP affiliate are invisible no more. The bus drivers, secretaries, maintenance workers, custodians, and instructional assistants who make up SKACE launched a media blitz. The members set out to show not only the school board but the entire Salem-Keizer community that without them, schools would cease to function.

Adopting the Bachman Turner Overdrive hit song "Taking Care of Business" as their theme, the group took out newspaper ads describing individual members' contributions to schools, developed radio spots, and presented flowers to graduating seniors.

Members came to work wearing hot pink baseball hats and buttons proclaiming the campaign theme. They attended the June school board meeting en masse, wearing their hats and buttons and singing their theme song.

As a final gesture, school bus drivers announced they wouldn't be available to drive students to school on the last day of the year unless they had a contract settlement. (Earlier, in an agreement with the Salem Education Association, the district had extended the school year by one day.)

The strategy worked. At last—after 17 months of bargaining—SKACE and the district reached a settlement. The contract, overwhelmingly ratified by members, contains many gains, including:

- ▶ the right to Association representation in grievances and other matters, and improvement of other Association rights
- ▶ no dismissal without just cause for any classified worker
- ▶ complete revamping and improvement of vacancy and transfer, layoff and recall, and grievance procedures
- ▶ a new and comprehensive article basing transportation bidding purely on seniority
- ▶ a reclassification giving more than 650 employees higher pay grades in the contract's second year
- ▶ a 4 percent raise beyond any step increase in the contract's first and third years
- ▶ full insurance benefits, with a \$15 a month employee contribution, for all full-time employees.

Nielsen sums up members' reaction: "These gains are monumental." At the table, too, SKACE takes care of business.

KENTUCKY

Back from the Brink

Two years ago, the schools of Floyd County, in the Appalachian region of eastern Kentucky, were in bad shape. The district's fiscal condition was dismal, and so was its absentee rate.

The Kentucky Department of Education took over complete control of the district, taking

charge of everything from finances to curriculum development.

At the time the Floyd County Education Association urged cooperation. "Trust has to be built up again among teachers, the school board, and the state, so that our children can get the best possible education," said FCEA President Roberta Luxmore.

This year, a healthier Floyd County district is sharing in the Kentucky's sweeping school

reforms—and it's back under local control.

FCEA's willingness to trust is paying off. Recently Floyd County teachers and classified personnel ratified an agreement giving them an 11 percent raise.

The new pact also includes the development of a grievance procedure, creation of a teacher resource center, allocation of \$75 per child for supplies and \$15 per child for math manipulatives, and three computer labs for district middle schools.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Stopping Vouchers: Together We Can!

When Portsmouth voters smashed a voucher proposal by 5 to 1 last month, the local anti-voucher coalition learned several lessons from its victory.

"Everybody realizes that maybe alone we can't do it, but together we can," says Portsmouth teacher Barbara Hopley. Parents, businesspeople, teachers, organized public employees, and other concerned citizens pooled their talents. Parents and other citizens headed the effort; the Association of Portsmouth Teachers contributed strategies and hard work.

Two years ago the same body defeated a tax cap initiative—and there's the second lesson.

"The coalition was well established. We knew what each group needed to do," explains Hopley, New Hampshire's member of NEA's Board of Directors.

"And our local president, Joe Arnstein, has a monthly column in the local paper, so the community knows who we are and what the issues are in the schools."

A bonus from the new public awareness is a new seven-person pro-education majority on the nine-member City Council.

That's one final lesson: "We teachers often feel we don't have time to get involved politically," Hopley concludes. "We need to remember that the voters are making decisions that affect us."

UTAH

Morgan Teachers Offer To Forgo Salary Hike

In contract negotiations under way since last spring, Utah's Morgan Education Association has offered to forgo a hike in the salary schedule this year if the school district will stop spending more than it takes in.

How can the district show good faith? By cutting at least one of two administrative positions the superintendent added this year, explains UniServ director Pat Arakaki, MEA's negotiations spokesperson.

Over the last two years, Arakaki adds, the district has balanced its budget by spending down \$200,000 in reserves, cutting one teaching position, and slicing the textbooks and supplies budget in half.

State Side

ALASKA

Two Suits Pending

Alaska Gov. Walter Hickel is trying to dismantle critical education programs and cut funding for essential services, NEA Alaska argues in two law suits.

In the first suit, the Association asks for an injunction preventing the state from transferring functions from and cutting funds for the Professional Teaching Practices Commission without an executive order. PTPC is the ethics review board for the teaching profession, funded mainly from teacher certification fees.

In a second action—on behalf of all public employees under the Teachers Retirement System and the Public Employees Retirement System—NEA-Alaska charges that medical and retirement benefits are being denied on the basis of age.

When retirees reach age 65, they pay more money and get fewer medical benefits, explains NEA-Alaska President Don Oberg. Also, younger retirees aren't receiving the same cost of living increases as older retirees.

IOWA

Historic Coalition To Boost Reform

The Iowa State Education Association has formed the nation's first nonprofit corporation dedicated to supporting local school transformation.

ISEA has joined with the state's leading education groups, business organizations, and political leaders to create the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC).

The group's primary purpose: to help coordinate and support local school district efforts to restructure schools. NISDC will raise and disseminate funds, sponsor workshops, provide expert assistance, and serve as a clearinghouse for ideas.

"There's no step-by-step recipe for school reform," says ISEA staffer Gerry Ott, "but we hope the spirit of collaboration and support we've created at the state level will help local districts realize that it's okay to experiment and find new ways of doing business."

At a recent national education forum held in Des Moines, U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander told Iowa educators

he was impressed with their plans, adding, "I'll do everything I can to help you succeed."

ALABAMA

AEA Wins in Court

The Alabama Education Association won a significant victory this fall as a Montgomery Circuit Court ruled in its favor to counter

SCHOOL SPENDING TAB

Burden Falls on States, Localities

Over the past decade or so, state governments have picked up an ever larger share of education expenses so that states now kick in 49 cents of every education dollar.

Local governments chip in most of the rest—about 44 cents of each dollar.

The federal share of education costs has been dropping since 1980 and now accounts for less than 6 cents of every school dollar.

Listed below are the state and local percentages of education spending for each state and the District of Columbia.

Local Share of School Revenue, 1990-91

1. Dist. of Col.	90.5
2. New Hampshire	90.3
3. Nebraska	67.7*
4. Oregon	67.2
5. South Dakota	63.8
6. Virginia	60.1
7. Michigan	60.0*
8. New Jersey	58.1
9. Vermont	58.0*
Massachusetts	58.0
11. Maryland	56.8
12. Colorado	56.3*
13. Nevada	56.2
14. Illinois	55.8*
15. Wisconsin	55.3
16. Missouri	55.0
17. Connecticut	53.9
18. New York	53.8
19. Ohio	52.1
20. Rhode Island	51.8
21. Arizona	51.7
22. Pennsylvania	51.3
23. Kansas	50.5
24. Texas	49.0
25. Montana	48.3
UNITED STATES	44.9
26. North Dakota	44.3*
27. Minnesota	43.2
28. Tennessee	42.6
29. Iowa	42.3
30. Wyoming	41.4
31. Florida	41.3
32. Maine	40.7
33. South Carolina	39.1
34. Indiana	38.5*
35. Utah	36.6
36. Louisiana	33.7
37. Georgia	32.4*
38. Idaho	32.3*
39. Oklahoma	30.5
40. Arkansas	29.7
41. Mississippi	29.6
42. North Carolina	27.2
43. West Virginia	26.8
44. Delaware	25.9*
45. California	25.4
46. Alaska	23.7*
47. Kentucky	21.2
48. Washington	20.6
49. Alabama	20.2
50. New Mexico	11.9
51. Hawaii	0.1

State Share of School Revenue, 1990-91

1. Hawaii	91.2
2. New Mexico	76.2
3. Washington	73.9
4. Kentucky	70.4
5. California	67.4
6. North Carolina	66.7
7. Alabama	66.6
8. Delaware	66.1*
9. West Virginia	65.4
10. Alaska	63.6*
11. Oklahoma	61.4
12. Georgia	61.2*
Arkansas	61.2
14. Idaho	60.4*
15. Utah	57.0
16. Louisiana	56.5
17. Indiana	56.4*
18. Mississippi	54.9
19. Wyoming	53.4
20. Maine	53.3
21. Florida	52.9
22. Minnesota	52.5
23. South Carolina	52.4
24. Iowa	52.3
UNITED STATES	48.9
25. North Dakota	48.2*
26. Tennessee	48.0
27. Kansas	44.5
28. Rhode Island	44.2
29. Pennsylvania	43.5
30. Arizona	43.2
31. Texas	43.1*
32. Ohio	42.9
33. Montana	42.8
34. Connecticut	42.1
35. New York	41.2
36. Wisconsin	40.9*
37. Nevada	40.1
38. Missouri	39.6*
39. Colorado	38.8*
40. New Jersey	38.3
Maryland	38.3
42. Vermont	37.0*
43. Massachusetts	36.9
44. Illinois	36.7
45. Michigan	35.4
46. Virginia	35.0
47. Oregon	26.7
48. Nebraska	25.8*
49. South Dakota	25.7
50. New Hampshire	7.3
Dist. of Col.	NA

*Data estimated by NEA

Source: Computed from NEA Research, *Estimates of School Statistics* data bank.

year when school employees are not receiving a pay raise, the governor's action could have hurt. Fortunately this ruling by the circuit court keeps the reserve fund intact."

MARYLAND

The Budget Battle

When Gov. William Donald Schaefer signed a budget balancing bill that cut state spending by \$450 million, he said there was no alternative to deep cuts because "the people said to me, no new taxes."

The Maryland State Teachers Association, noting that the Governor's proposal would mean drastic cuts in jobs and school services, says Schaefer just isn't listening.

In a poll commissioned by MSTA, 76 percent of likely voters favor increasing funding for Maryland public education even if it means raising taxes.

When asked if they would rather see state government cut school services or raise taxes, 65 percent favored raising taxes.

When asked if they would be more or less likely to vote for a candidate who supported increased spending for education even if it meant an increase in their taxes, 70 percent of those sampled said "more likely."

MSTA is mobilizing its 37,000 members to press the General Assembly for emergency revenues when it reconvenes in January.

MSTA also seeks a long-term tax reform plan that would increase and equalize school funding.

MAINE

Hands Off, Buster!

More and more state governments these days are trying to balance their budgets by dipping into public employee pension funds. It won't happen in Maine.

By a margin of roughly 70-30, Maine voters last month approved a ballot initiative amending the state constitution to provide "that funds appropriated to the Maine State Retirement System...may not be diverted to another purpose."

"The people of Maine spoke out: leave the retirement system alone!" says Maine Teachers Association President Ann Ancil. "They respect the sanctity of our retirement system, and they don't want it tampered with."

Governor Guy Hunt's unprecedented line item veto.

Hunt's target? The \$21 million expenditure for the school employee health insurance program reserve, which he declared unconstitutional.

School health insurance funding as well as seven other education programs, totalling another \$4 million, were slashed by Gov. Hunt. Among the vetoed items was a nation-

ally acclaimed education program to fight teen-age drug use. Hunt said he believed the items were "detrimental to the best interests of the state of Alabama."

At issue constitutionally was whether the governor could exercise the line item veto after the legislature had adjourned. The decision: No way.

Contends AEA Executive Secretary Paul Hubbert, "In a

Meet:

Walter Dean Myers, prize-winning children's author, may be best known for his 1988 Vietnam War novel, *Fallen Angels*.

His later books include *Scorpions* (a Newbery Honor Award winner) and *The Mouse Rap*, both set in Harlem.

Another of Myers' books, *Now Is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom*, has just been published by HarperCollins, and a novel about a father-son relationship, *Somewhere in the Darkness*, is due from Scholastic next spring. Recently NEA Today staff writer Nancy Needham went to New York City to interview Myers about his life and work.

You grew up in Harlem?

Yes, I came to Harlem from West Virginia when I was three, after my mother died. Eventually 11 of us lived in Harlem, but not together.

The family was very poor. My foster father did pick-up work. Once he worked for a moving company that was one of the legitimate businesses owned by the gangster Dutch Schultz. That ended up in my novel *The Mouse Rap*.

Why do you write kids' books?

When I was getting ready to write the 'Great American Novel,' I supported myself writing adventure stuff for men's magazines like *Argosy*. Eventually they became girlie magazines, so I switched to Black magazines.

Then I saw that the Council on Interracial Books for Children had a contest for Black writers of children's books. I entered with a picture book, and I won. Later I expanded a short story into my first novel, *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff*. I don't think about the Great American Novel any more; I find these books fulfilling.

Will you write about the Gulf War as you did about Vietnam?

Let me tell you about a great letter I got from a kid during the Persian Gulf thing. He was so intrigued with the military, he'd decided to join. He went out to buy some military books, and one of them was *Fallen Angels*. He wrote to tell me that my book made him decide not to go.

So you won't write about the war?

No, although my son, an Air Force officer, was involved—at a U.S. base in Turkey. I'm not tempted to write a book about the Gulf War, because there's a fine line between writing about a subject and glorifying it.

Take the movie *Boyz n the Hood*. The concept is antigang—or it might seem so to me. But to kids who are shut out from society, gangs are an "avenue of value." These kids will emulate the gang behavior no matter what concept is behind the movie. When someone on the screen is shot, what they see is, number one, he's in a movie, he's being valued!

We need national leadership to actively "revalue" young people—who are academically good, for example—to counter



Walter Dean Myers

Making Intellect Cool

the negative values from TV and elsewhere: violence, toughness, sex.

How do you handle negative behavior in a story?

I do writing workshops for middle school students and teenagers in Jersey City, where I live. One student wrote a story about a mother using crack. I told her, you can't just drop this in. You have to give background, show why she's taking crack. You don't put down the person but you have to put down the behavior, devalue it, explain it but not condone it.

Do you keep sex out of your young adult books?

I do, because it's so difficult to put it in perspective in 250 pages. You have a 16-year-old boy who's dying to have sex with anything that holds still. If you let him do this, how do you say that this natural act is somehow not right? How do

you bring in all the social implications?

Every time I sit down to write, I think of television as a value-setter. I may write about a moral kid. Good. But TV says being tough is better. The TV people know that a certain kind of value system—"cool" masculine—is what sells beer and blue jeans. I have to counter that.

How do you teach kids to write?

I try to demystify the writing process for them—I bring in my contracts, the blue slips from editors. I tell them I've got two skills: a feeling for language acquired through reading, and discipline. All else can be learned.

I give them structure—show them how I do it even as I do it—the outline, the finished product. They find out that my son was a klutz at Little League baseball when he was 11—at 5'11" he couldn't handle his size. I bring them clippings about the games. Then they can read *Me*,

Mop, and the *Moondance Kid* and see my story about a klutz who lived with foster parents.

I show them that writing isn't magical, because here's an ordinary person (me) doing it. They see me as like them because my background is similar to so many of theirs.

How young were you when you started writing?

I had a severe speech handicap as a child. I got very angry about reading in front of the class because I couldn't do it properly. Then one teacher told me to write instead. I did poems—things like that.

By high school I'd identified my own "avenue of value" as intellectual, because I couldn't speak well and had a limited social life. But I knew my family couldn't afford college for me, so I dropped out of high school and joined the Army.

I got a college degree later, from New York State's Empire State College.

You'd like to see more kids choose intellect as their avenue of value?

They've got no choice. For my degree I did a project in which I interviewed 500 inmates of prisons and youth houses. I quickly found out why people are in prison: they did stupid and bad things. But I couldn't figure out why so many were repeaters. Why would they go back? To these horrible conditions?

The answer was: lack of academics. There's nothing you can do without academics. It bothers me that we talk about reading taking you to some magic land. Nonsense. Reading is not a luxury. You can't survive without it. You read well, handle information, or you're dead meat.

What needs to change?

I don't know about education, but I do know about attitudes, about the history of my people. Black people before the Civil War were learning even though they worked 14 hours in the fields. It's obvious there's nothing wrong with the people. But we need to shift the responsibility in education—to the community and to the kids.

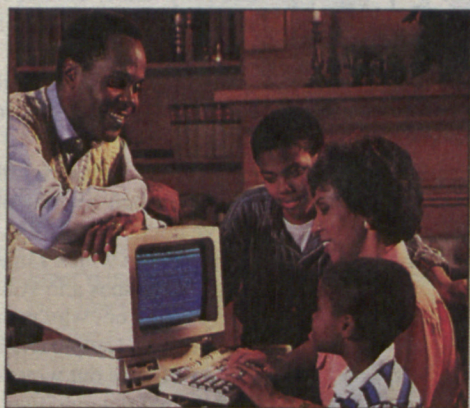
German and Swiss kids have a sense of going to school to learn. American kids go to school to be entertained, and they dare the teacher to educate them.

When I was a kid in Harlem, my family created the parameters about who was responsible for what I did in school. If I had D's on my report card, I started crying a block before I got home.

But during the '60s, every condition of every group was blamed on hostile forces in society. Now when I go to schools, I see a retrogression.

So even if schools are lacking in some places, the solution lies with the kids and the community. That's my view for Black kids.

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RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

At Willow Creek Junior High in Rochester, Minnesota, classroom teachers use the time their students spend in music and physical education classes to talk about how to improve school programs.

At Seneca Falls (New York) Middle School, teachers meet during the time that's available on the half-dozen or so student "early release" days.

At Orchards Elementary School in Lewiston, Idaho, teachers developing a new program on their own time receive in-service credits from the district for their work.

The situation is the same all across the country. The school reform movement, calling for restructuring and site-based decision making, has focused new attention on an old challenge for education employees: to find the necessary minutes and hours in an already overcrowded schedule for proper planning and development.

Educators know the importance of making the most of every moment. Seneca Falls Middle School teacher Mike Marriam, for example, notes that each of his school's six early student-release days during the year offers 90 minutes for a planning meeting. A lot can be accomplished in that time, he says.

At Mynderse Academy—a high school on the same campus as Seneca Falls Middle School—teachers have been experimenting with schedule changes. They began by eliminating a last period that provided students with extra help and adding a new first period, before students arrive, for faculty meetings.

Soon the loss of time when students could get academic help started taking a noticeable toll. Now the planners are investigating the feasibility of turning study halls into subject-area tutorials, staffed by teachers.

Whatever new plan they explore must take into account the need to coordinate the bus runs for the district's four schools.

Teachers in Lewiston, Idaho, are also making scheduling changes. Fifth grade teacher Donna Johnson of Orchards Elementary reports that another local school in her district has shortened its recess and lunch periods to create a 30-minute block

It's About TIME

It's about time—time that educators played a significant role in determining and developing school programs. It's also about time—the time that school employees need to do this planning.



School employees need time to plan and develop programs like this one—at Idaho's Orchards Elementary—which trains student "conflict resolution managers" to help settle nonphysical disputes between their peers. Above: teacher Donna Johnson and fifth grade conflict managers (from left) Curtis Graham, Aaron Stewart, Keira Kanby, and Felicia Rosen.

of time for collaborative planning each day.

At Willow Creek Jr. High in Rochester, Minnesota, seventh and eighth grade core curriculum teachers have solved some of their time problems by forming teaching teams. All the teachers on a team can meet when their students jointly attend nonacademic classes.

Personal and family life science teacher Vivian Wassink explains a major advantage: "Before we formed teams, we met at the end of the day, when we were exhausted. Now we sit down to discuss things with energy and enthusiasm."

Team faculties also use their time together to meet jointly with any parent whose child is having problems. Parents find it helpful to get the perspectives of several different teachers, Wassink says.

Idaho's Donna Johnson maintains that the real key to making more time available is professional dedication.

"We all know that for any social change to take place, people must make sacrifices," she says. "When we donate personal time, the momentum often moves the district to give us time."

Sacrifice can bear immediate fruit, Johnson notes. She and her colleagues were meeting after school to develop a student conflict management program.

On the advice of a consultant from a local college—provided to them through their participation in NEA's Mastery in Learning Project—they asked the district to award them in-service credits for their work. When they presented formal, detailed minutes of their meetings and a program syllabus, the district agreed.

Teachers in Willow Creek are trying a different approach. As the district moves closer to creating middle schools, teachers are telling administrators again and again—and again—how strongly they feel about the importance of establishing a daily common planning time.

"Scheduling this time would not only provide the opportunity for everyone to enjoy the wealth of shared decision making," says Wassink. "It would also ease the time crunch for all of us who are always interested in trying innovative teaching and learning processes."

—Diane Dismuke

NEA to Members: What Time Is it?

NEA's National Center for Innovation recently conducted a survey* to find out how the NEA members involved in school restructuring are finding time for all the necessary planning.

The National Center staff polled NEA members at some 50 schools involved in pioneering new approaches to improving how learning takes place. All these schools are participating in an NEA school restructuring program.

"While there may be no single right answer, it's important that members find an answer that works for them," says Gary Watts, senior director of the NEA Center for Innovation. "When the agenda doesn't include planning time, the result is employee burnout."

Among the strategies reported:

► **Purchased time.** A district pays teachers for coming in on vacation days or

over the summer. Or a fund pays substitutes to take over classes.

► **Borrowed time.** Each school day is lengthened by a few minutes so students can eventually be released for a partial day of teacher planning. Or, in team teaching, team members alternate between teaching and planning.

► **Common time.** The entire day is rescheduled so several teachers will have the same free period.

► **Freed-up time.** Student teachers, parents, community members, volunteers, or administrators take on teacher tasks or classes.

► **Better-used time.** Faculty meetings deal exclusively with planning, not announcements or administrative details.

► **New time.** Teachers are compensated in new ways—for example, with in-service credit—for using their own time.

► **Rescheduled time.** The school calendar is changed to provide more teacher planning days.

—D.D.

*The National Center for Innovation will have a survey report available by April 1992. To get a copy, write to NEA National Center for Innovation, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

Mark Twain and Me—Disney Channel, Sunday, Dec. 1, 7-8 p.m. ET. A drama recounting the friendship of an 11-year-old girl with the famous author.

National Geographic Explorer—Turner Broadcasting System, Sundays, 9-11 p.m. ET. Dec. 1: "Zaire River Journey." Dec.

8: "World War II." Dec. 15: "Jason Project—Galapagos."

Schoolbreak Specials—CBS-TV, designated Tuesdays, 4-5 p.m. ET. Dec. 3: "The Girl With the Crazy Brother." A girl is confused when her brother is diagnosed as a schizophrenic. Dec. 17: "Malcolm Takes a Shot." A 17-year-old basketball star is diagnosed as epileptic. Jan. 7: "Soldier Boys." A group of boys' fascination with war leads to near tragedy.

Jan. 21: "Two Teens and a Baby." A new baby causes dramatic changes in a family.

NOVA—PBS, Tuesdays, 8-9 p.m. ET. Dec. 3: "Avoiding the Surgeon's Knife." A report on four participants in a radical medical program to unblock clogged heart arteries through diet, exercise, and stress reduction. Dec. 10: "The Biggest Movie Ever Made." How an Imax/Omnimax film was shot from a space shuttle. Dec. 17: "The Fine Art of Faking It." How

science helps detect art forgeries. (photo below)



Afterschool Specials—ABC-TV, designated Thursdays, 4-5 p.m. ET. Dec. 5: "Over the Limit." Two teens face the realities of a fatal drunk-driving accident. Jan. 16: "Don't Touch." A game of dolls leads to child molestation. Jan. 30: "A Question About Sex." A girl's decision to become sexually active highlights the issue of sex education in the schools.

ABC News Special. Pearl Harbor: Two Hours That Changed the World—ABC-TV, Thursday, Dec. 5, 9-11 p.m. ET. Produced in cooperation with NHK—Japan's public broadcasting network—this documentary features historical film and photos never before seen in the U.S., plus commentary from eyewitnesses to the infamous attack that triggered U.S. involvement in World War II. David Brinkley, who as a journalist covered this war, narrates. For a study guide, contact your local ABC TV affiliate.



Christmas on Division Street—CBS-TV, Sunday, Dec. 15, 9-11 p.m. ET. Check local listings for time. Actors Hume Cronyn and Fred Savage star in a story about a friendship between an upper-class suburban boy and an elderly homeless man who lives on one of Philadelphia's most rugged streets.

The Lamb Chop Play-Along Show—PBS, Monday-Friday, twice daily, premiering Monday, Jan. 13. Check local listings for times. A 30-episode series of half-hour programs, featuring puppeteer Shari Lewis.



Radio Smithsonian's Spirit of the Present: The Legacy from Native Americans—American Public Radio, starting sometime in January. Check local listings for dates and times. This 13-part documentary series features American Indian community leaders, elders, artists, and educators discussing oral traditions and modern struggles over land, water, and fishing rights.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's TV and radio in Washington, D.C.

Kids are learning to read with a little help from their friends.

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—Jeanne Ellis, Graham Elementary School, Shelby, NC

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THE QUESTIONS CONTINUE

What Every Kid Should Know About What People **THINK** About COLUMBUS

What people think about Columbus—and 500 years of European-Native American encounter—has changed in the past year. Kids should know why.

Never again will Christopher Columbus sit on a pedestal in United States history. Never again will the encounter between European and Native American that began with his first voyage be presumed to have been mutually beneficial.

For 1991 was the year—the eve of the Columbian Quincentenary—when most Americans learned for the first time that Christopher Columbus brought slavery to this Hemisphere. And that the Native American population was reduced from perhaps 60-70 million to a tiny fraction of that as a result of contact with Europeans.

American Indians have known this. Why have other Americans not known it? After all, Samuel Eliot Morison (no debunker of Columbus) in *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, laid it on the line about Columbus' depredations. The book's been in print since 1942.

Perhaps, to borrow a phrase from Oregon teacher Bill Bigelow of the "Rethinking Columbus" project, it was easier to "pay attention to the perspectives of the historical 'winners' and ignore perspectives of the conquered."*

Now the 1991 pre-Quincentenary, with its blockbuster books and TV specials, its adversarial politics, has blasted open Columbus' reputation, and the man has gone from icon to historical figure—a year ahead of time.

*The booklet *Rethinking Columbus* is available for \$4 plus \$2 p&h from Rethinking Schools, 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212.



Why this sudden shift of focus?

Certainly, one reason is that American Indians want to set the record straight—to stop being invisible in American history.

Which means stop being invisible in their own schoolrooms. Listen to Oklahoma teacher Carl Downing, an American Indian, who was a schoolboy in California in the 1930s.

"It was November 1935," Downing recalls, "and my class was preparing a Thanksgiving skit. The teacher—who was one of my favorites—told some of us to 'run about and make noises like Indians.'"

"With that sentence," Downing continues, "that teacher perpetuated a myth about Indians. If we continue such myths, we hurt children."

A second reason for the about-face on Columbus: the appearance in the last 20 years of a new American Indian history that looks at the European-American encounter from the perspective of Indians.

"From the Native American perspective, the arrival of Columbus and those who followed was a terrible blow, not the start of something new," says Neal Salisbury, professor of history at Smith College, who studies Indians of the Northeast. "It unleashed epidemics and new forms of exploitation of both land and people," he adds.

At the same time, in New England, many Indian tribes survived to interact on a near-equal basis with the English—until the colonists terminated the equal relationship with violence.

The story of that interaction has moved from historians' monographs to newspaper features and television documentaries—sparked by the Quincentenary—and to museum interpretative programs.

Such as the Wampanoag program at Plimoth Plantation, in Plymouth, Massachusetts, a museum that tells the story of the Pilgrims and the Indians they encountered.

Nanepashemet, a Wampanoag Indian manages the Wampanoag interpretive program there.

"Something we try to explain to visitors is that the Indians of 17th-century New England were not passive.



They had their own political agendas," Nanepashemet explains.

"When the Wampanoag chief, Massasoit, made an alliance with Plymouth Colony, he wasn't trying to be nice to the English, but to obtain protection from his adversaries, the Narragansetts," he concludes.

So the Quincentenary can help children learn facts, but it can also show them how an outside event, like the Quincentenary, can jar people into taking a fresh look at the past.

"The traditional Columbus story was a European myth," remarked Ramon Ruiz, professor of Latin American History at the University of California at San Diego. "For the people of the Americas, it was a disaster."

Not all Americans have known that. Now they do.

"No one studying the history of the encounter between Europeans and Indians can ever take point of view for granted," warns Patricia Nelson Limerick, professor of history at the University of Colorado, who specializes in the history of Indians in the American West.

"The same event experienced by Indians or by Europeans can carry completely different meanings."

It did 500 years ago; it still does.

—Nancy R. Needham

NOT COLUMBUS. NOT AN ARAWAK. Two figures from a 17th-century encounter: an Iroquois chief and a Governor General of New France; from the museum Sainte Marie Among the Iroquois in Liverpool, N.Y.

Where NEA Stands

At last summer's Representative Assembly, NEA delegates thoroughly debated the "Columbus question." The delegates called for NEA to present an "all-sided analysis of the Columbus landing."

NEA has since endorsed the position paper on the Columbian Quincentenary adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies. The Council finds the voyage of Columbus "too significant...for...schools to ignore or to treat romantically or trivially." The paper also includes a first-rate bibliography. For one free copy, write NCSS at 3501 Newark St., N.W., Washington, DC 20016.

"A lot of companies offer retirement plans. How do I know which one to choose?"

A large number of companies offer retirement plans. This fact, coupled with today's unsettled financial climate, makes selecting the right plan very difficult indeed. That's why the NEA and Nationwide designed a plan exclusively for you: the NEA Valuebuilder™ Annuity.

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The NEA addressed the first issue by spending a year reviewing annuities and the companies behind them. Our goal was to select one that met our rigorous financial standards as



well as your needs for service and security. We chose Nationwide Life Insurance Company for its outstanding record of financial strength and stability.† Then, together, we customized the NEA Valuebuilder Annuity for you. You can rely on both the company and the plan.

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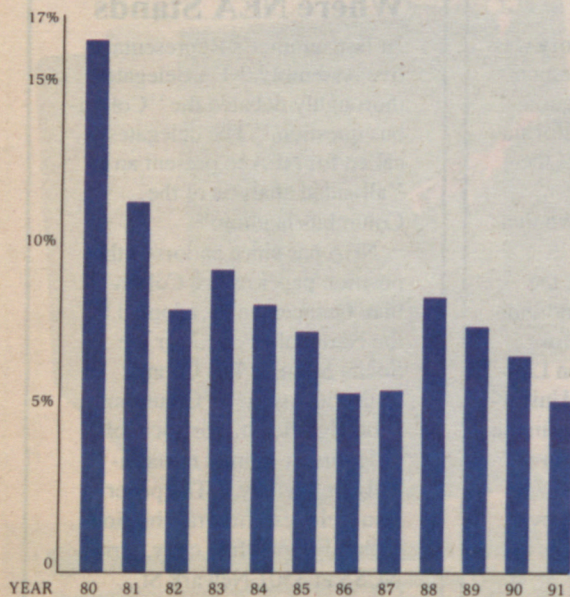
We urge you to include the tax-advantaged NEA Valuebuilder Annuity in your financial plan. The sooner you put it to work for you, the better prepared you can be at retirement. For complete information and a prospectus, return the coupon or call us toll free today:

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Interest Rates*



*3-month U.S. Treasury Bill Index Rate from January 1980 through June 30, 1991.



†Standard and Poor's 1991, Moody's 1991.

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

In Kentucky

Appalachian Culture, Curriculum Mix

At Stanton Elementary, a small school on the edge of the Cumberland Plateau, the sounds of a dulcimer, fiddle, and guitar and the sweet refrain of an Appalachian ballad echo in the halls.

Mixed in with the traditional themes of the hills are modern messages about the environment, society, and world events.

This isn't a time warp. It's the schoolwide curriculum Stanton staff developed to preserve Appalachian customs and teach modern lessons.

The curriculum integrates Appalachian music and dance into many academic subjects, weaving modern words with traditional music. The arts program is considered a necessary component of every child's education and a vehicle for establishing identity and self-esteem.

In the ungraded primary class, for example, NEA member Geneva Pence shows her students

traditional instruments hand-crafted by the school's artist-in-residence, David Musser. At Stanton, every student learns to play the music of their ancestors on the guitar and dulcimer.

"People were afraid this region would lose its cultural heritage in one generation," says Stanton principal Faye King. "Parents weren't handing down traditions and customs the way they did when I was growing up. So we decided to do it for them."

Once they've learned some of the traditional songs, the students study other lessons—on the environment, for example—writing new song verses to explain what they learn.

Linking music and science is just one of the ways Stanton staff are treating their students to activity-based learning. "We do a lot of team teaching that integrates schoolwork the way the real world integrates mathemat-



ics, literature, and history," explains Geneva Pence.

In the process, Stanton staff are finding new ways to teach—and learn. "We research everything we're going to teach, and we exercise the same cooperative learning strategies we teach our children," says fifth grade teacher Fern Brewer.

"We've created a learning community through site-based decision making and peer coaching," Faye King sums up.

Following through on their

innovative approaches to teaching, Stanton staff are exploring different ways to measure achievement. Recently, Stanton was awarded a \$15,000 grant to develop a portfolio assessment program.

"We're getting inquiries about the program from all over the country," notes King.

Best of all, says Pence, the whole community has claimed the school as its own. Parents are involved in every aspect of school projects. Even new teach-

Stanton students (above) reach back to their Appalachian roots with the help of fifth grade teacher Fern Brewer (far left) and (center) primary teacher Geneva Pence.

ers are learning the clog dances.

"We wanted students to become proud of their heritage by learning the arts that made Appalachia unique," notes Fern Brewer. "Now they see that history is interwoven in everything you do."

—Anita Merina

In Minnesota

Revolution in Three-Part Harmony

"Every student can succeed," says counselor Linda Gustafson, "if learning becomes the constant and time becomes the variable—instead of the reverse."

For the 75-member faculty at Franklin Junior High, the concept is both simple and revolutionary. With the help of a \$500,000 grant, it's turning the school upside down.

Located in Brainerd, the heart of Minnesota's lake district, Franklin is home to 1,000 eighth and ninth graders.

Last spring, the school won a grant from the RJR Nabisco Foundation's Next Century Schools fund to implement a three-part strategy for fundamental change.

Outcome-based Education.

First, explains science teacher and NEA member Clare Thompson, faculty members adopted a new approach known as "outcome-based education." "We specify what we want the kids to know and be able to do. Then we give them the time they need to learn it."

In Thompson's classes, students must earn an A or B—or receive an *Incomplete*. Those who need extra time or assistance take advantage of "extended learning opportunities"—teacher-staffed study halls—on Saturday mornings or after school two days a week.

To test students' mastery of an outcome, Thompson often asks them to explain a concept. An example: "Show me you under-

stand how rocks are formed by taking a mineral and telling me a story about what's happened to it." No more multiple choice.

"We don't build failure into the system," Thompson says. "No one can fall through the cracks. For kids, that's a really empowering feeling. They get second chances. It gives them a lot of hope and a feeling of accomplishment."

Once students master outcomes, they proceed to the "enrichment lab," where a school staffer (funded by the grant) helps students with projects they design. One student will teach a unit on butterflies to elementary kids; several others are making a video about the local animal rescue team.

Interdisciplinary Teaching Teams. Second, the school's phasing in interdisciplinary team teaching. This fall, the students learned about *The Diary of Anne Frank* in English class, World War II and German geography in social studies, and the development of the atomic bomb in science.

In the spring, several teachers will collaborate on a unit about air—weather, balloons, the history of flight, poetry. The approach, Thompson says, allows students "to make some connections and to see education as more relevant to their lives."

Thompson's team of four teachers will teach the same 130 students for the entire year. Previously, a student might have three teachers in each subject each year.

"With adolescents, whatever we can do to ensure greater continuity is really important," explains Gustafson, who works as both counselor and manager of the restructuring efforts.

In addition, a team's teachers share a common planning period. One advantage: the regular discussions help the teachers identify students with special needs in a fraction of the time it used to take.

Parent-Teacher Communication. Third, Franklin teachers are adding parents to the team effort to help each child succeed.

"The grant," notes special

education teacher and Brainerd Education Association President John Ward, "will allow us to install a voice-mail system so parents can call in, find out how a child is doing, and get each day's assignments. It'll be easier for us to reach parents, too."

Teachers are devising other ways to include parents—for example, a day when parents come to school to "sub" for their children and learn a bit about what's expected.

Ward says all three strands of the restructuring plan have helped build a staff that's "renewed, enthusiastic, and more innovative than ever."

Clare Thompson agrees. "I notice a lot more pride in our school—from teachers and students alike."

Still, she adds, "change is scary, and it's messy. There's no neat way to do this. And there are no instruction manuals. It's trial and error, like the scientific method. The only constant here is change."

—Stefanie Weiss

People

The Link

"Senior citizens here in Ringwood are out-and-about all the time, having too much fun." That's the mock complaint of New Jersey kindergarten teacher **Dorothy Edgar**.

The school district wanted senior volunteers to share their experiences with kids—but the only ones who seemed interested were those who were homebound.

No matter. There's always the phone.

Edgar got the school board to install a speakerphone—complete with Mickey Mouse—in her classroom. Then she checked out likely prospects among Ringwood residents and made a directory of those who were interested.

Now, a Ringwood senior answering the phone may be greeted by a five-year-old voice carefully enunciating, "Hello. I'm Tracy, and I'm in Mrs. Edgar's class. How are you?"



"They tell each other stories," says Edgar. "The seniors ask the kids what they're doing in the classroom, then maybe tell them a story that's related.

"Kids tell stories they heard in class or at the library. And they're learning to appreciate adults who aren't their parents." Youngsters can use the

phone whenever they have free time. The whole class sometimes calls a classmate who's home sick and getting restless.

"The boys are just as good at

using the phone as the girls," Edgar notes. "Just as in my class they all play in the doll corner, the block corner, the truck corner."

Holiday 'Gift Lift' Lifts Spirits

Indiana art teacher **Louie Laskowski** used her gift to make a gift that encourages others to give gifts. How's that for holiday spirit?

It started when Laskowski, an award-winning artist and Association activist, was asked to design a poster for the Mental Health Association/Indiana State Teachers Association annual "Christmas Gift Lift."

Three years later, Laskowski's ink-and-watercolor "angel of light" (inset photo) has become a popular poster—and logo for brochures, invitations, and

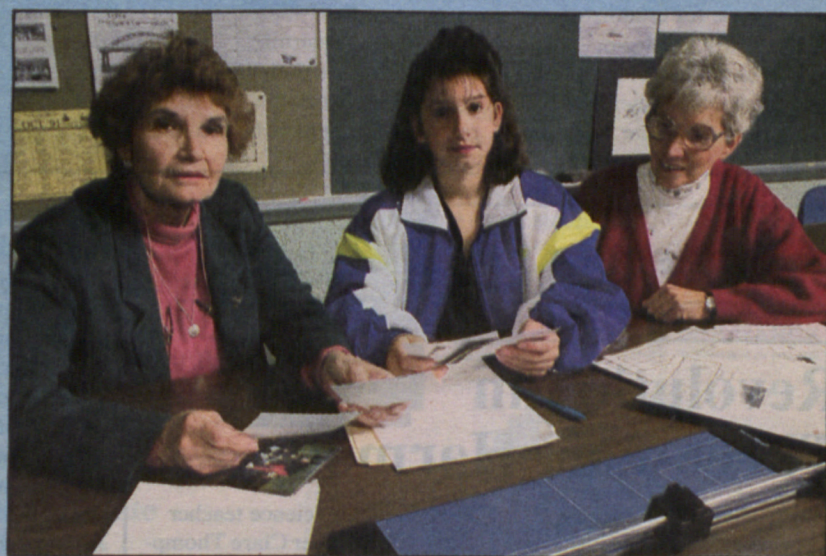
promotional materials.

The now-familiar image inspires Association members and their students to donate practical presents during the holiday season.

Last year, 40,000 gifts—new clothes, toiletries, books, and games—were distributed to patients and residents in state hospitals, 229 nursing homes, and 425 community-based facilities all over the state of Indiana.

"An angel, to me, is a generous kind of spirit," Laskowski says.

Perhaps it takes one to know one.



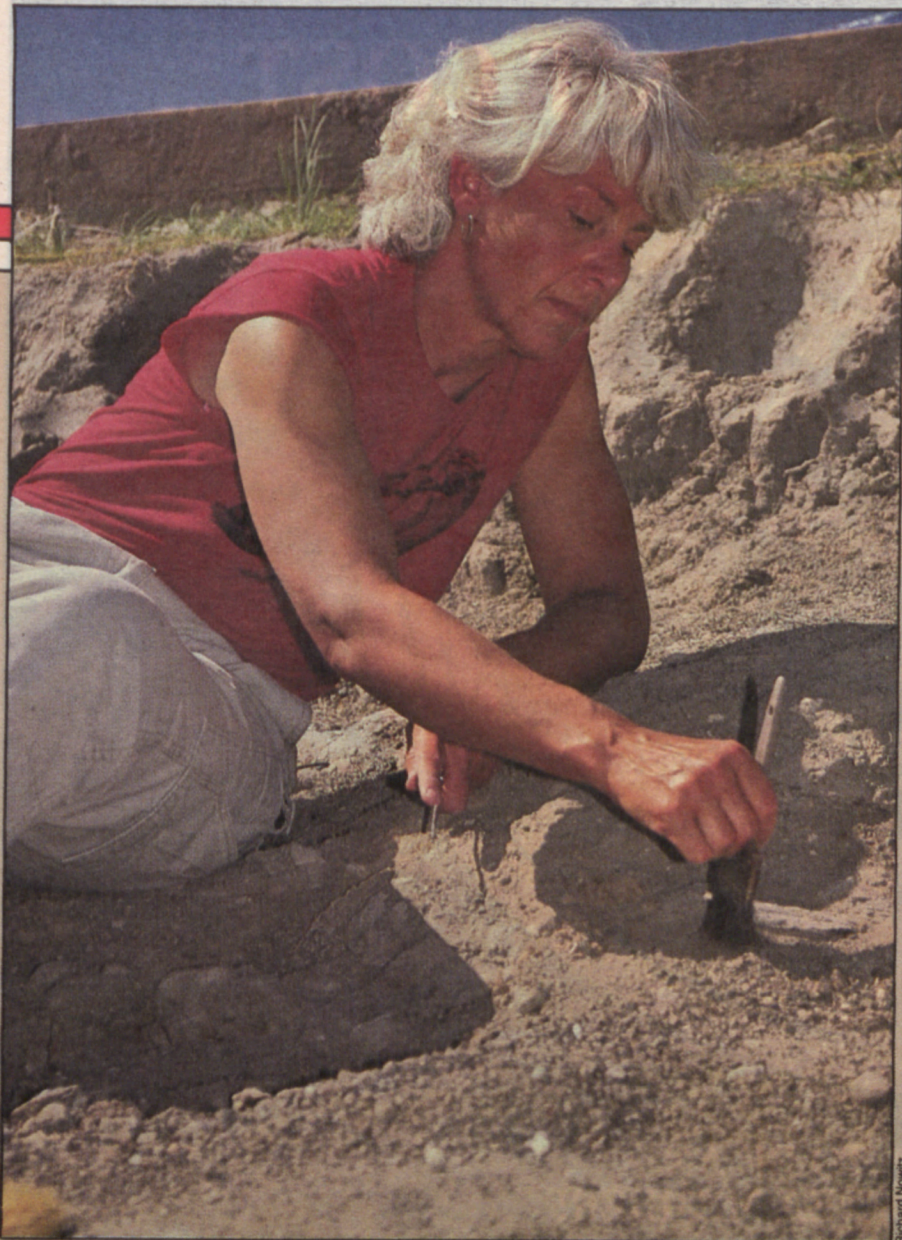
All the News That's Fit To Print

What's black and white and read all over? At Delaware's Gunning Bedford Middle School and in its students' homes, the answer is the *Panther Times*.

The PTA-funded quarterly is designed, written, and produced by Bedford students, staff—and parents. More than just a good read, the *Times* turns up everywhere from classroom lessons to parent involvement exercises.

"Everyone has a little piece of the *Times*," says **Mary Edwards** (left), editor, teacher, and chief troubleshooter for the newspaper project. Working with computer instructor and production expert **Joan Daley-Lindell** (right), and student editor **Kim Kiefer** (center), Edwards blends PTA news and staff announcements with articles by Bedford students to come up with each new issue. "We cover everything," explains Edwards. "From articles on braces and fashion to advice on what to do when you're bored but grounded." The notebook-size newspaper even has an annual literary supplement.

"The kids say we're as good as the local paper," Edwards proudly declares. "And they save every issue as a permanent record of their time at Bedford."



Dino Eggs Have Sunny Side Up For Colorado Teacher

The shells of dinosaur eggs are more like those of bird's eggs than those of reptile eggs. We know this thanks to the research of **Betty Quinn**, earth and space science teacher at York Junior High School in Adams County, Colorado.*

For the past nine years, Quinn has spent her summers in a Montana dinosaur field, called the Willow Creek Anticline, as part of a research team led by paleontologist Jack Horner of Montana State University.

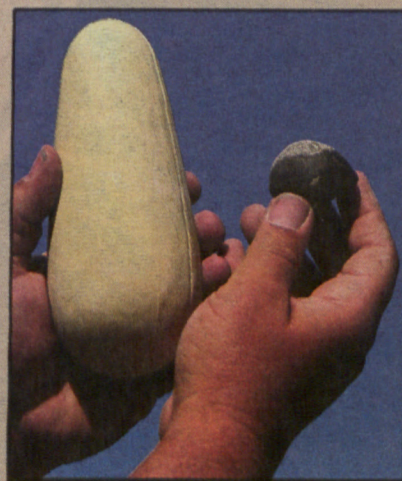
"What I learned about dinosaur eggshells supports Horner's hypothesis that before dinosaurs became extinct, they'd developed many bird-like characteristics," Quinn explains.

Quinn also found her teaching career in the dinosaur fields. "The late Bob Makela, a team member and teacher from Montana, told me, 'you are a teacher.' So I became one."

How do Quinn's students react to her summer career? "When I bring in dinosaur bones and we start talking

millions of years, for them it's like a step into fantasy, but they're learning science."

*For a reprint of Quinn's scholarly article on the microstructure of dinosaur eggshells, send a stamped (98 cents), self-addressed 8" x 10" envelope to Betty Quinn, 8290 Federal Blvd. #8, Westminster, CO 80030.



'Doggone' Training Program Helps Everyone

Eagle Valley Junior High in Carson City, Nevada, is going to the dogs—for the benefit of people.

For the past several years, teachers **Richard Scott**, **Warren Wish**, and **Kathy Kellie** have trained puppies for Guide Dogs for the Blind. The organization, based in San Rafael, California, provides guide dogs to people with impaired vision.

But before the dogs are ready to meet the people whose lives they'll be sharing, they must be trained to follow certain commands and to tolerate stress. For example, they need to get used to walking on slippery surfaces; riding elevators; navigating in stores, hospitals, fire stations, and bowling alleys; traveling on planes and buses; and being around children.

That's where Scott, Wish, and Kellie come in. Through the local 4-H Club, the three—as well as several parents of students at the school—work with pups supplied by Guide Dogs for the

eight weeks old, it's these folks who nurture and train them.

In adapting the dogs to children, notes Wish, the teachers have one invaluable asset. They can bring the dogs into the classrooms—and the dogs

aren't the only ones who learn from the experience.

As the kids work with the dogs, small miracles occur. Those with low self-esteem gain confidence when a dog responds to their commands.

Children who speak little

English are thrilled to see the dogs understand the few words they do speak. Rapport develops between the children and the dogs. Personal barriers come tumbling down.

Stressing that each dog is individual, Guide Dogs for the Blind names every animal. Shown to the left are Guava, Lexus and Tandy with Scott (in white shirt), Wish (in blue shirt) and Kellie (in foreground), plus students and some parents in the program.

The day after this photo was taken, Wish returned Lexus to Guide Dogs for the Blind, ready to be matched with a person who needs her.

This is the third dog Wish himself has trained. The first turned out to be unsuited for guide work and made a career change, becoming a permanent member of the Wish household.

"It's hard to part with a dog after sharing its life for so many months," says Wish. "I shed tears of joy and tears of grief. You have to keep telling

yourself that someone will gain independence because you trained this dog—and gave it up."

Matt Willis



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advantage of these programs, the savings you realize could pay the cost of your membership dues many times over! It does pay to participate in association programs. And not just financially. You can also have the security of knowing that the quality of these products and services is backed by your association!

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TRENDS

Papap's Payments

Almost 10 million American women are rearing 16 million children whose father is absent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's up from 7.1 million women in 1979. Of those who ask the courts to order child support payments, slightly over a third are successful.

The courts awarded those lucky ones a mean—pun intended—child support payment of \$2,995 for 1989, when the poverty level for a woman and two children was \$9,885. Half the fathers paid all they were supposed to, while a fourth paid nothing.

What makes a father more likely to pay? Living in the same state with the children, or having visitation rights, or joint custody—feeling, in short, that in some way they're still his kids.

Read Their Lips:
'More New Taxes'

When times get tough, cities raise taxes. That's how things have played out, at least, in a U.S. Conference of Mayors survey of large and small U.S. cities. Of the 62 cities surveyed, 45 have raised taxes during this recession.

City leaders point to "a dramatic reduction" in federal aid and a depressed national economy as reasons for their tax hikes. And that's not all. The survey reveals still more financially induced woes. Cases in point: 74 percent of the cities postponed building and road work, 68 percent laid off workers, and 48 percent have cut services.

The future? Fully 58 percent say things are worse now than in 1981, and 48 percent predict worse problems to come.

Ethnicity and Survival

While Black, Puerto Rican, white, and American Indian populations fight high infant mortality, AIDS, homicide, and suicide, Asian Americans enjoy the lowest death rates in all age groups and for almost all causes of death, according to a recent federal report. The report attributes Asians' better health to such factors as low meat consumption, better prenatal care, and a lower smoking rate.

Japanese Americans, for instance, have an infant mortality rate 33 percent lower than the white rate. In contrast, the death

rate for American Indian babies is 50 percent higher and the Puerto Rican rate is 40 percent higher than for whites, while life expectancy for African Americans has decreased steadily for the last four years.

Yes, They're Saying No

When it comes to illicit drugs, the children of the '90s are saying "no" more and more often. The number of 13-year-olds who've tried marijuana has declined 52 percent since 1987, while those trying cocaine has decreased by 69 percent. This news is from a survey of shoppers at 100 malls conducted for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

Among 17-year-olds, 18 percent are less likely to try marijuana, 33 percent are less likely to try cocaine today than in 1987.

Maybe most hopeful of all: peer pressure is coming into play. The number of teens who strongly agree that people on drugs behave stupidly has increased 23 percent since 1987, and the number who don't want to hang around drug users has risen from 54 to 64 percent.

Color Me Cerulean II

A year ago *NEA Today* reported attempts to meddle with the 64-Crayola Crayon box, scribbling out eight colors altogether ("Color Me Cerulean," October 1990). The attempt was a washout.

A backlash of fans of the original eight hues came forth as the Raw Umber and Maize Preservation Society (RUMPS). RUMPS members, all adults, complained



bitterly about this latest assault on their collective nostalgia.

Who will get the crayon maker's ear: the strident, well-organized RUMPS, or the youngsters, who didn't miss the old shades to begin with?

For now, in the tradition of a leading soda manufacturer, Crayola has released the retired eight as "classic" colors.

Watch this space.

Sports Rebound

After nearly 15 years of decline, participation in high school sports climbed this year to nearly 5.3 million students, up about 41,000 over the previous year. Girls accounted for about 80 percent of the increase.

The top six states in sports participation: Texas, California, New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Building Student Self-Esteem

A mobile in the classroom can build students' self-esteem. Just ask San Diego sixth grade teacher Sheila Mehigan of Ericson Elementary School.

Mehigan makes her mobile from photos of the students, taken in class and during activities, and drawings by the students. She hangs the whole collection from a colorful plastic coathanger.

The mobile serves double duty, says Mehigan. Besides making students feel good about themselves, it's a great decoration for open house.

A Lead to The Library



Wondering how to get more students to use the library? Greenville, North Carolina, school librarian Debra Kornegay

suggests a way to start the ball rolling.

Kornegay polled students at Pactolus Elementary School, asking who had a public library card. She put those kids' names on a large poster headed "Read. Succeed"—and displayed it prominently in a hallway for all to see.

Kornegay passed out library registration forms to the kids who didn't already have cards, then hand-delivered the completed forms to the local library.

When the new library cards came in, Kornegay distributed them. With each went a "Read. Succeed" bookmark to let the kids know that belonging to a library is something special. A special assembly honored the new cardholders.

Teaching Science Anywhere

Get your students into science at an early age, and their interest will never wane.

That's the philosophy of fourth grade teacher Cindy Dean, recently named Delaware's Outstanding Elementary Science teacher. Dean's "living" classroom includes plants, gerbils, tarantulas, even insects and crustaceans in the process of metamorphosis.

Dean's students at Lewes Middle School in Cape Henlopen perform experiments in one corner of the school parking lot. Recently, they tested the theory that "a catapult using one-thumb power and

one small nut will fire the greatest distance using three springs."

Dean reasons that when it comes to determining the power of force, thumb power works as good as anything.

Ditto Sheets With Dash

Do your students moan and groan when you hand out dittoed worksheets? If so, capture their attention with pizzazz, says Joan Macey, art teacher at Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson Elementary Schools in Binghamton, New York.

When Macey taught third and fourth grade a few years back, her students never saw a dull worksheet. Their math sheets consisted of math problems set inside flying monsters, footballs, and bubbly fish. Sometimes the number of problems a youngster got correct would lead—one by one—to a box office selling tickets to a rock concert. Macy also personalized the problems by incorporating students' names into them.

On social studies and science worksheets, she'd include a personal question—What's your favorite TV show? What foods do you like best? When worksheets are creative and personal, Macey suggests, not only do the students take their work more seriously, but teachers get to know the students better.



Grading Surprises? Figure Them Out

Want to prevent angry phone calls from parents about grades?

Retired high school teacher Frederic Mann suggests a way to avoid misunderstandings: involve students in the grading process, so they'll understand why they get the grade they do.

When Mann was teaching in Claymont, Delaware, he'd ask his math students to submit to him the grade they thought they deserved. Then he'd respond to each individually.

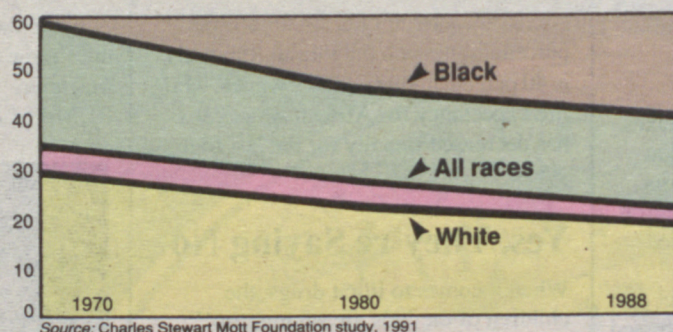
If he and a student disagreed, Mann would check his calculation and either change the grade or explain why the grade was what it was. Then he'd ask the kids to tell their parents what their grade was going to be and why.

The process cut misunderstandings, says Mann, to approximately zero.

DATA BANK

Teen Mothers

The bad news: out-of-wedlock-births to teens jumped 61 percent from 1970 to 1988. The good news (depicted here): a shrinking proportion of firstborn babies have mothers under 20.



Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation study, 1991

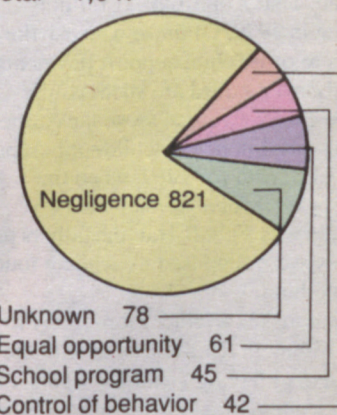
Schools and Courts

Who sues school districts, and why? Two researchers surveyed 500 public school districts recently, asking for reports on lawsuits filed against them over a three-year period.

Lawsuits Against School Districts, 1985-88

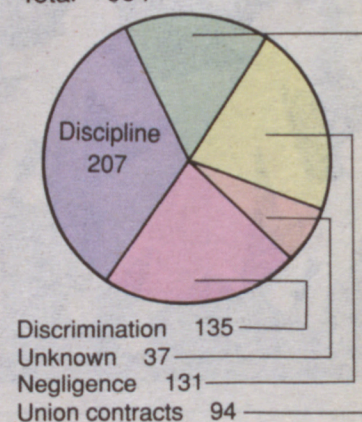
Filed by students

Total 1,047



Filed by employees

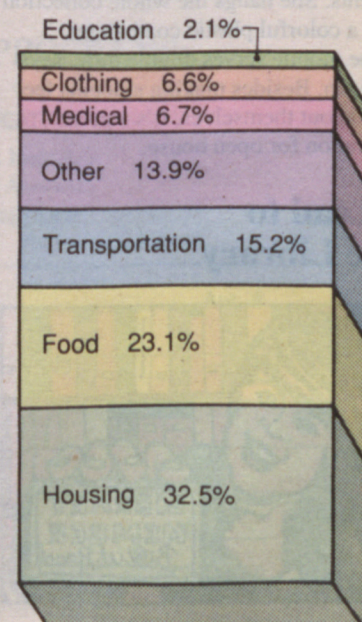
Total 604



Source: Michael Imber and Gary Thompson, University of Kansas, in *Education Week*

Kids Cost

Parenting isn't just difficult, it's expensive, too. The average cost (1989) of raising a child from birth to age 18 in a Midwestern urban area: \$105,055. Here's how that breaks down.



Source: Youth Indicators, 1991, U.S. Department of Education

Through its "Cable In The Classroom" program, The Family Channel is offering teaching resource material for the critically acclaimed miniseries *Roots*, airing Jan. 20-25 at 8PM E/P. The six instructional teaching guides are geared to Jr. and Sr. high school students. Make checks, money orders or purchase orders for \$19.95 out to The Family Channel; and send to The Family Channel/Roots, c/o AmeriComm Direct Marketing, P.O. Box 149, Norfolk, VA 23501-0149.



Due to program length, we are unable to provide this program without commercials.

LEGAL TIMES

After 25 years of relative success before the U.S. Supreme Court, advocates for public employees are gearing up to confront a wholesale assault on constitutional rights over the next two decades.

What's the reason for this pessimism? To find the answer, let's go back some months to Justice Thurgood Marshall's last decision in *Payne v. Tennessee*.

In deciding this otherwise unimportant case, the majority overruled two previous Supreme Court decisions. In the process, the six conservatives on the Court adopted a radical new standard for deciding whether well-established Supreme Court precedent can be overruled.

Under this new standard, if a prior ruling was decided or reaffirmed by a close vote in face of a "spirited dissent," the Court won't be bound by it.

In his forceful dissent, Justice Marshall warns: "The majority today sends a clear signal that scores of established constitutional liberties are now ripe for reconsideration. . . . Cast aside today are those condemned to face society's ultimate penalty. Tomorrow's victims may be minorities, women, or the indigent."

Describing the outcome in *Payne* as "but a preview of an even broader and more far-reaching assault upon this Court's precedents," Justice Marshall next identifies what he calls an "endangered precedents list."

Marshall catalogs 18 Supreme Court decisions he believes will soon bite the dust because they were decided or reaffirmed by a 5-4 vote over a vigorous dissent.

On the list are four decisions of particular interest to NEA members.

► *Rankin v. McPherson* (1987)—It is a violation of the First Amendment for a public employer to fire or otherwise punish an employee for speaking out on a matter of public concern.

► *Aguilar v. Felton* (1985)—It is a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment for the government to provide direct financial assistance to parochial schools.

► *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois* (1990)—It is a violation of the First Amendment for a public employer to fire or refuse to hire, recall from layoff, or promote an employee/applicant because of party affiliation.

► *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* (1986)—A woman's right to choose, first recognized in *Roe v. Wade* (1973), is reaffirmed by a 5-4 vote.

Of course, no Supreme Court can

overturn a prior decision unless and until the issue has been raised. Two cases that will be decided by the Court this term offer just such an opportunity.

The issue in *Lee v. Weisman* is whether it's a violation of the Establishment Clause for public school officials to allow a member of the clergy to recite prayers at a middle school graduation ceremony.

But the case will have ramifications far beyond the narrow issue of graduation prayers. The Bush Justice Department has now entered the fray and in an amicus brief has urged the Court to abandon the test used by the federal courts since 1971 to decide Establishment Clause cases.

The so-called Lemon test provides that a challenged practice is unconstitutional if it does not have a secular purpose, has a primary effect of advancing religion, or creates an excessive entanglement of government with religion.

In its amicus brief, the Bush Administration urges that the Lemon test be scrapped. In its stead, the Administration propounds a simpler standard under which a challenged practice would be struck down only if it would lead to the "establishment of an official [state] church" or if it "compels persons to participate in a religion or religious exercise contrary to their conscience."

One need not be a Yale law professor to see that virtually any state-sponsored religious activity would pass constitutional muster under such a lax test.

NEA's joined the PTA, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and 32 other members of the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty to file an amicus brief opposing the Administration's argument.

The second case, *Collins v. City of Harker Heights, Texas*, is more complex but the stakes are exceedingly high. An unfavorable ruling by the Supreme Court could result in public school employees losing all of their constitutional rights.

For at least the last 35 years, the Supreme Court consistently has held that public school officials are bound by the U.S. Constitution when performing the duties of their office, whether deciding on pupil assignment or firing a teacher. In *Collins*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals made an exception to this rule.

The court held that when a governmental unit, such as a city or a school board, acts as an employer, then the Constitution simply doesn't apply. The court's reasoning: the unit isn't exercising a "uniquely governmental" power, but is functioning like any private employer.

SUPREME COURT OUTLOOK:

OMINOUS DAYS AHEAD

Taken at face value, this rule of law could have devastating results for public school employees.

In its amicus brief in *Collins*, NEA argues that if the Fifth Circuit is right in holding that "the Constitution itself imposes no obligations or restrictions on the government when acting as an employer," then over 30 Supreme Court cases decided since 1956 would effectively be overturned.

These are decisions recognizing that pub-

lic school employees can't be punished because of their speech or union membership, or fired without due process, or deprived of equal protection of the laws, or searched by their employers in violation of the Fourth Amendment.

NEA attorneys are fairly confident that the Supreme Court won't adopt the Fifth Circuit's radical new theory; the consensus is that the Court agreed to hear the *Collins* case to correct an error by the lower court.

But you never know.

Collins was argued before the Court on November 5 and *Lee* on November 6, 1991. Decisions in the two cases are not expected until next spring.

President Bush's appointment of Justices David Souter and Clarence Thomas to the High Court has ensured a conservative majority well into the 21st century.

If Justice Souter serves on the Court as long as his predecessor, Justice Brennan, he will not retire until the year 2024. And if Justice Thomas retires at the same age as the man he replaced, he'll still be hearing cases in 2032.

The handwriting is on the wall. With a solid 7-2 conservative majority, the era of using the federal courts to expand job protection for public school employees is over. Now and for the next 25 years, the battle will be over whether employees will retain the constitutional rights they now enjoy. The prospects are not good.

—Michael Simpson

NEA Office of General Counsel

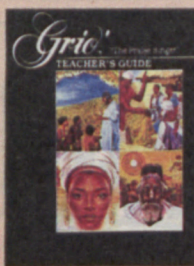
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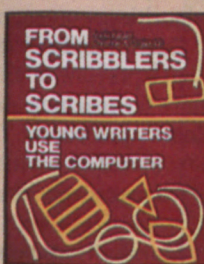
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CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Risk-Taking in Learning, K-3. Robert D. Young. On the assumption that personal growth requires individual risk-taking, this book helps teachers guide students to take risks that prepare them for a lifetime of active learning, growth, and change. 80 pp. \$9.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. 800/229-4200, FAX 203/933-5276.

WRITING

From Scribblers to Scribes: Young Writers Use the Computer. Sonia Katzer and Christine A. Crnkovich. Two Association members from Boulder, Colorado, offer research, theory, and a practical guide—based on the language acquisition philosophy—for teaching children 4-8 to write. 212 pp. \$18.95 prepaid. Teacher Ideas Press, Box 3988, Englewood, CO 80155.



PUBLISHING

How To Do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers. Nancy Brigham and others. A new edition of a highly readable nuts 'n' bolts publishing guide by a United Auto Workers staffer. 176 pp. \$14.95. From booksellers or (add \$3 p&h) from Writer's Digest Books, 1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45207. 800/289-0963 for bank credit card orders.



The "Free or Inexpensive" feature is included in NEA Today as a service to readers. Items listed are selected by the editors at their discretion from review copies submitted by publishers.

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.



Psychiatrist Arlene Hegg has worked with clinically depressed adolescents since 1982. Before entering private practice in Boulder, Colorado, a year ago, she served on the staff of the National Institute of Mental Health.

How does "feeling blue" differ from clinical depression?

The length of time depression lasts indicates whether it's merely a passing mood or a serious biological illness.

A depressed mood will last for a week or two at most. If it persists longer, it's clinical depression—the brain's chemistry is affected.

How common is true clinical depression?

It's our country's number one mental health problem. It afflicts 10 million people every year, although only 30 percent of those people ever seek treatment.

How serious is it?

Very serious. Clinical depression can involve the whole person—that is, it can affect behavior, physical health and appearance, and academic performance. It can reduce the ability to make simple decisions and to face minor, every-day pressures.

Is all clinical depression the same?

No—there are three different forms.

► In *unipolar depression*, the patient is depressed all the time.

► In *bipolar depression*, the patient becomes manic-depressive—that is, alternates between feeling very low and very high.

► In *bipolar depression II*, antidepressant medication can make the patient have hypomanic episodes.

Studies show that children who have bipolar depression II will most likely become manic-depressive as adults.

So children do get clinically depressed?

They certainly do. Most victims of clinical depression are adults, fewer are adolescents, fewer still are children.

Yet a significant number of youngsters are affected. A recent study by the Institute of Medicine—a Washington, D.C., research firm quoted by the

National Institute of Mental Health—shows that 12 percent of America's children age 7-1/2 years or older have mental disorders. Severe depression is among the most common, along with crippling anxiety and developmental impairment.

What causes depression?

We don't yet know. We do know, though, that a biological vulnerability to it does run in some families.

Studies show that if clinical depression appears in three generations of a family, the odds are great that still more family members will suffer.

What are the symptoms of clinical depression?

Children's symptoms differ from

those of adults.

When we think of persons who are depressed, we think of them as sad. But depressed children feel numb, empty, angry, or irritated.

Youngsters with clinical depression may withdraw, not care about anything. They may become sullen or begin having temper tantrums. They may feel tired all the time or complain of inexplicable aches and pains.

They may have trouble concentrating. Their grades may drop. Children who were once very social may start getting into fights. They may become hyperactive.

Any change for the worse in a

child's normal behavior can be a sign of clinical depression.

Is there a link between depression and drug abuse—or low self-esteem, or being unpopular or a loner?

Depression may be linked with any of those things.

What we don't know is which is the cause and which is the effect. For example, often drug abuse and depression appear at the same time and we don't know which came first.

What about a stressful event like parental divorce or the death of a loved one?

Sometimes a stressful event can cause the onset of clinical depression in someone with a predisposition.

Often, of course, when people look back in time, they see a connection between depression and a stressful event. Actually, the depression may have existed before the event occurred.

What's the likelihood that depression will lead to suicide?

Unfortunately, the odds are very great, especially for teens. In our country, 5,000 people die from suicide each year. Among young people aged 15 to 19, suicide is the second most common cause of death.

We don't know how many of these people suffer from depressive illness, because not all victims of depression consult a mental health care professional. But we think the vast majority of people who commit suicide are clinically depressed.

How is clinical depression treated?

When a patient is clinically depressed, the physician in charge should consider medication as well as psychotherapy. Patients on medication tend to do better in psychotherapy.

But anyone trying to treat a depressed child with medication faces a delicate task, because the proper dosage is determined by the patient's weight.

Then, like all medications, antidepressants may produce side effects. And like all medications, they should be taken only as directed, and only under the supervision of a physician.

How likely is it that treatment will be successful?

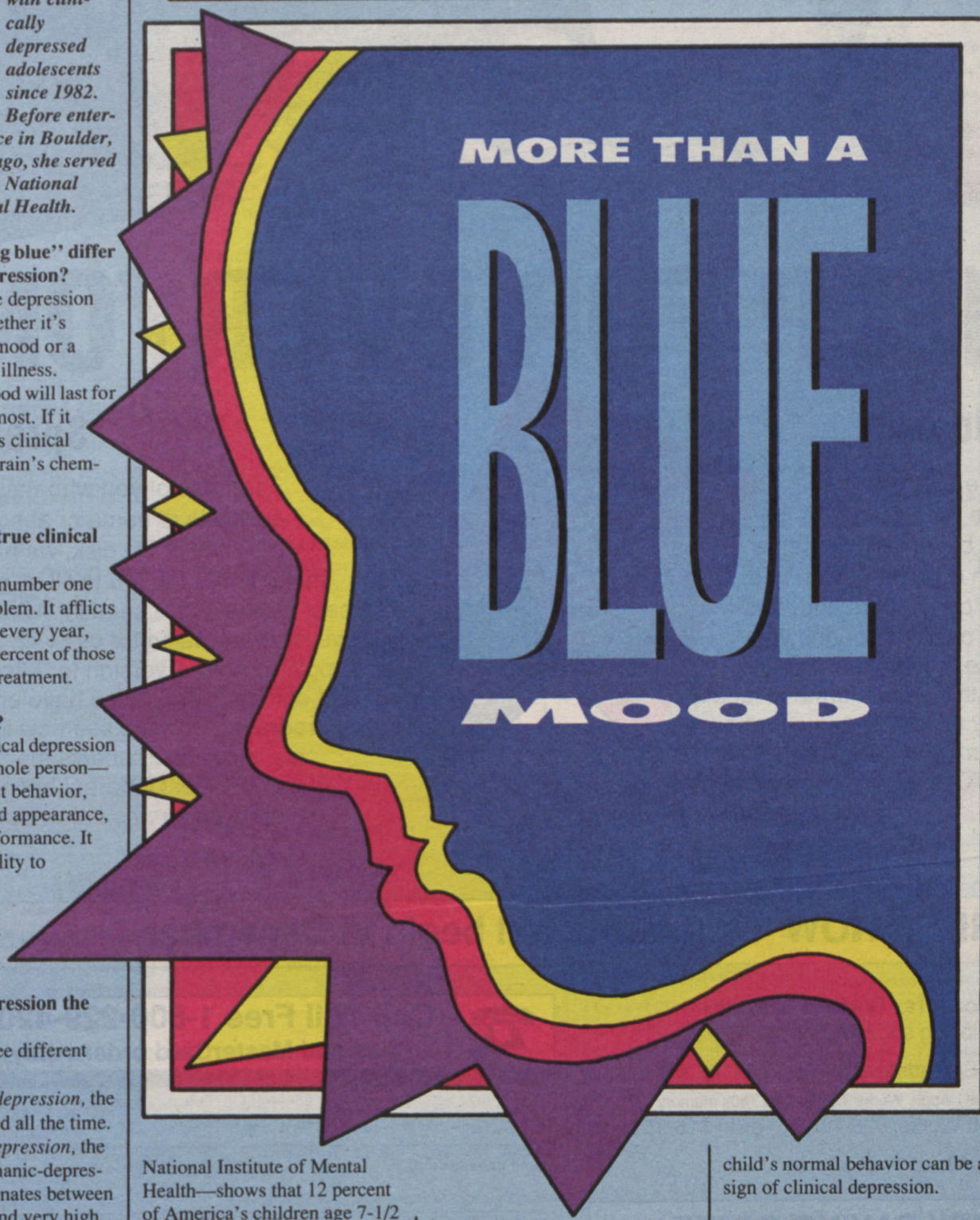
In adults, the success rate is 85 to 90 percent. We have no figures for children.

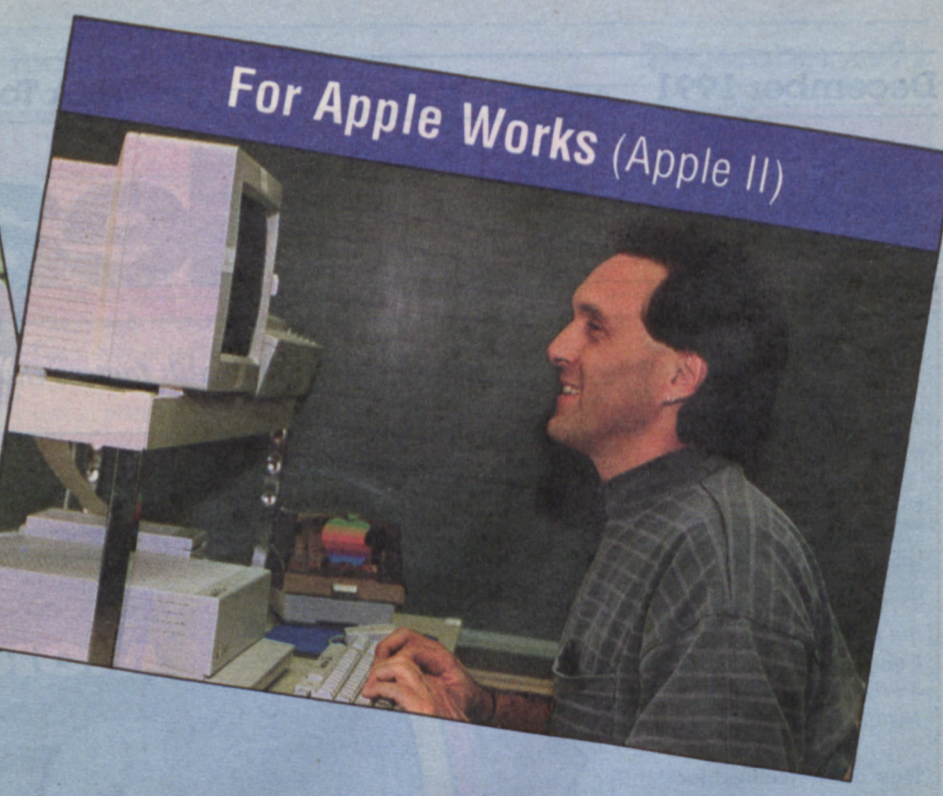
What we do know is that the most important step in treating depression can be taken by the patient, or someone close to the patient: simply seeking help.

How can teachers and other school employees help children who're clinically depressed?

They can help by simply showing that they care. They can approach the child, ask what's wrong and if they can be of help. Children who suffer from depression feel absolutely worthless. They can't imagine that anyone would even notice them, much less be concerned enough to talk to them.

Any school employee who suspects that a child has depressive illness should refer that child to the school counselor. The counselor will evaluate the child and help the child's family find the right treatment.

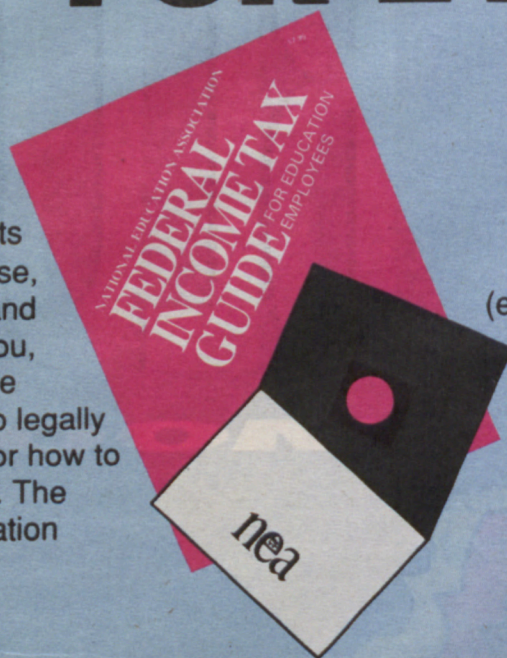




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YOUR NEA

NEA Members Join Key National Board

Three more NEA members have been appointed to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The 63-member Board is an independent body developing standards for a voluntary system of advanced certification for K-12 teachers.

Eighteen NEA members are on the Board; the new members are:

► Lois Distad, a reading specialist at the Bar Nunn Elementary School in Bar Nunn, Wyoming. Because of her work on the Governor's Committee on At-Risk Children and Adolescents, she became the Wyoming governor's special assistant—and the nation's

only teacher—at the President's Education Summit in 1989. She was Wyoming Teacher of the Year.

► Barbara Firestone, a fifth and sixth grade teacher at McCollom Elementary School in Wichita, Kansas, and past president of the Kansas Council for the Social Studies. She was 1990 Kansas Teacher of the Year.

► Sharon Mahoe, president of the 10,000-member Hawaii State Teachers Association. Currently on leave from Honolulu's Moanalua High School, where she teaches Spanish and Hawaiian languages, Mahoe helped develop the Central Oahu Teacher Center and planned the elementary school foreign language program for the State Department of Education.

NEA Board Okays SCEA Funding

At its October meeting, the NEA Board of Directors approved an appropriation of up to \$100,000 from NEA's 1991-92 contingency fund to assist the South Carolina Education Association in implementing a marketing strategy to increase its membership.

There were 148 votes in favor of the appropriation; none opposed; and one absentee. Four members of the board were replaced by alternates.

Phil Rumore (New York) and Betty Derryberry (Tennessee) were not present for the vote, but indicated their affirmative positions. The absentees were Mark Simon (Maryland), Phil Rumore (New York), Carol Ahearn (Overseas), Betty Derryberry (Tennessee), and Julia Kerr (At-large).

The four alternates were Sharon Boudreau and Roberta Hollowell (California), Rod Hineman (Ohio), and Barbara Stockman (Retired).

NEA Election News

Delegates to the 1992 NEA Representative Assembly, July 5-8, in Washington, D.C., will elect a secretary-treasurer and two Executive Committee members. The secretary-treasurer will serve a two-year term; Executive Committee members, three-year terms. All terms begin September 1, 1992.

(The 1991 Representative Assembly adopted a constitutional amendment providing that the three executive officers—president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer—shall serve three-year terms. The amendment becomes effective on September 1, 1993, for the president and vice-president elected by delegates to the 1993 Representative Assembly and on September 1, 1994, for the secretary-treasurer elected by delegates to the 1994 Representative Assembly.)

Candidates must have been NEA Active members for two years immediately preceding the election.

The May/June issue of *NEA Today* will carry the photo and candidate statement of anyone filing for office and submitting a statement by April 1. Submission of filing forms does not constitute nomination for office.

The Representative Assembly may also need to elect at-large NEA directors representing ethnic minorities, administrators, classroom teachers in higher education, and Active members employed in educational support positions pursuant to Article V, Section 1 (c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Constitution. If such elections are necessary, the presidents and executive directors of state affiliates, the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Committee on Minority Affairs will be notified in June.

Filing forms and election information, including the *Campaign Regulations for Candidates for NEA Office*, are available from the NEA Executive Office, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Celebrate World Children's Day

Elementary and junior high students can celebrate the 1992 World Children's Day, Sunday, April 26. That day students' projects on this year's theme—"Future: All Children Deserve One. Today."—will be displayed at the United Nations Building in New York City. Write World Children's Day Foundation, 4401-A Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 287, Washington, DC 20008, or call 202/966-7226.

NEW WAVE

NEA EdStar in Action

Last winter, IBM and NEA teamed up to offer NEA Edstar, a computer system customized for education employees. Now, with nearly a year of experience under their belts, how are NEA Edstar owners using their machines?

To say NEA member Fred McNeil is busy is an understatement. McNeil teaches physical education at Stevenson Middle School in Centreville, Maryland. He coaches three sports—cross country, baseball, and basketball—and is active in community affairs.

"Sometime in the wee hours of the night or morning, I have to do the schoolwork I inevitably bring home," says McNeil.

That's why he's one of the many members who've turned to the NEA EdStar computer for help.

"I wanted to go beyond my old home computer, to do more than just the simple tasks, so I bought the NEA EdStar," says McNeil. "Now I'm creating certificates for my athletes, flyers for my students, and letters to parents—and that's just the beginning."

Keeping Up with Kids

Joyce Hoffman, who teaches gifted children at Franklin (West Virginia) Elementary School, had a more practical reason for using NEA EdStar.

"Students were coming into the class-

room with computing skills much more advanced than mine," explains Hoffman. "I decided I had to not only catch up but stay ahead of them."

"I chose the EdStar computer because I trusted NEA to come up with something that works for classroom teachers. I love the fact that it features a grading program, desktop publishing, even an encyclopedia."

"As a local Association president, I'm also using the EdStar to organize my responsibilities and publish a local newsletter," adds Hoffman.

Before choosing the EdStar, Hoffman called on her daughter and son-in-law to help. "My son-in-law is a computer researcher, and we decided to put the computer through its paces," Hoffman explains.

"We were impressed with how easy the tutorials were—unlike the ones for

the computer my daughter just received," adds Hoffman. "Every time I turned it on, I learned something new."

No More Cut-and-Paste

For first grade teacher Cathy Krouse, purchasing an NEA EdStar computer put an end to the time-consuming cut-and-paste work of creating a newsletter for parents.

A section leader at Luther Jones Elementary School in Corpus Christi, Texas, Krouse was responsible for producing a

information in, add some graphics, and I'm done," she says.

"The best part is having a printer as part of the package," adds Krouse. "I can immediately see the results of my work."

A Family Affair

At the home of Illinois high school counselor Ken Blasius, NEA EdStar has become family property.

"I have three kids—ages 12, 8, and 5," says Blasius. "They're using the computer for just about everything."

"Everything" includes desktop publishing, checking out sports scores on Prodigy, even writing an essay for homework.

"It's great when I, as a parent, want to explain the use of a word or ask the kids to look something up in the encyclopedia, and it's there at their fingertips inside this computer," says Blasius.

"In my work, I see the possibilities for keeping track of the students I counsel," says Blasius. "Having a computer made for me—for all teachers—makes the difference."

—Anita Merina

For additional information, or to order your NEA Edstar computer, call 1-800-637-4636 and ask for department 4025.



newsletter every six weeks.

Using the EdStar, Krouse discovered *Express Publisher*, the desktop publishing feature. "Now I just put the

LOOKING BACK

Oklahoma Rises . . . Again

The Oklahoma Education Association and education supporters across the state have scored another victory, their second in two years.

In October, Oklahoma voters soundly rejected an attempt to repeal the state's school reform law. The legislation provides for higher salaries, smaller classes, and stricter graduation requirements, at an estimated cost of \$2 billion over five years.

Last year, 20,000 Oklahoma education employees walked off their jobs in a dramatic statewide protest of the state's chronic underfunding of education ("Rising Up," September 1990). In an unprecedented display of unity, Oklahoma business leaders agreed to back the reform bill even though the bill authorized new sales and income taxes on businesses as well as individuals.

"If educators had gone to the legislature by themselves," explains Stillwater National Bank CEO Robert L. McCormick, Jr.,

"the new taxes never would have passed."

As a result, a number of Oklahoma legislators changed their votes and House Bill 1017 passed with exactly the number of votes it needed.

This year, anti-tax activists led a campaign to repeal the school reform law. The attempt failed. The final tally: 54 percent of Oklahoma voters rejected the repeal effort. For Oklahoma educators, it was still another sweet victory.



Lee Rudy Hoke

A New Corps of Volunteers

More and more students are giving the gift of time ("Lessons in Giving," March 1990). This welcome news comes from a new Gallup survey of American teens.

According to the survey, more than 13 million teenagers volunteer an average of almost 4 hours a week. They're helping out in nursing homes, reading programs, community cleanup campaigns, drug education efforts, and homeless shelters.

What makes the kids spend their time on others? Doing something useful, say almost half the teens. Some other reasons: they enjoy doing the work, want the learning experience, are helping a friend or family member, or are acting from religious concern. About 1 in 10 reports having been helped by volunteers in the past.



Larry Seltman

Short Takes



Edward James Olmos (Meet, February 1990) has put his anger about the "cancer" of the gang subculture to work. *American Me*, which Olmos (photo, left) wrote, produced, and directed, details Latino gang life in East Los Angeles and in California prisons. The film will be out in January...Former Memphis (Tennessee) Superintendent Willie Herenton (photo, above right) is



now his city's mayor. Herenton played a pivotal role in the establishment of the local NEA Learning Lab ("Memphis in Motion," May/June 1991)...The Holyoke school district is one of the four worst school systems in Massachusetts, says a state task force. State cutbacks in aid caused overcrowding and the layoff of 221 teachers. The Kelly School, featured in Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren* (Book Beat, September 1989), lost 10 teachers.

RESEARCH CLUES

Lessons from the First Year

Every new teacher enters the classroom with high hopes and ideals. But usually, by the time the first year is over, the students aren't the only ones who've received an education.

Iowa NEA member Dan Cox is three months into his second year teaching Spanish and government at Essex High School, but the memories of his first are vivid and unforgettable.

"In a word, it was overwhelming," recalls Cox. "Those first few months I thought long and hard, asking myself what it was I really learned in college. I went through a roller coaster of emotions."

Cox isn't alone. Recently, Metropolitan Life completed a two-part survey that interviewed new teachers before—and after—they entered the classroom.

The survey—conducted by Louis Harris and Associates—offers some sobering news and valuable lessons about America's students, and the new generation of teachers who'll be teaching them.

Like Cox, many students said teacher education courses prepared them academically for teaching, but did little to set them up for the real world of the classroom.

Here are a few of the survey's key findings:

► Virtually all new teachers believe that all children can learn. Before beginning their teaching career, 93 percent

agreed strongly that all children can learn. Almost 90 percent felt the same way after one year in the classroom.

► Before beginning their first job, only 28 percent of those interviewed strongly agreed with the statement that "many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students."

But, by the time the first year was over, that number had risen dramatically to 47 percent.

► When it comes to whether teachers feel they can "really make a difference in the lives of their students," the "experienced" new teachers are no longer so sure.

After one year of teaching, only two-thirds (68 percent) strongly agree that teachers can make a difference in their students' lives, a significant drop from the 83 percent who strongly agreed before beginning their career.

► Why? Nine out of 10 teachers indicate that the school-readiness of children is poor.

After one year of teaching, 47 percent of those surveyed strongly agree with the statement that "many children come to

school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students." That's a huge jump from the 28 percent of teaching graduates who said they felt that way.

► Those who work in the inner city, small towns, and rural areas are more likely than those in suburban areas to link outside problems to their students' poor educational progress.

And teachers of low income and minority students are more likely than teachers of more privileged students to believe that family and other outside problems present significant barriers to their students' education.

► As a result, 58 percent of first-year teachers believe "even the best teachers will find it difficult to really teach more than two-thirds of their students," a sharp rise from the 45 percent response from graduates.

► Despite this, most new teachers still feel they play an important role. An unchanged 89 percent continue to agree that if they do their job well "their students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions."

► What changes could make a difference? Some 51 percent of the new teachers surveyed favor smaller classes and better supplies and educational materials.

Another 27 percent name "continuous training and support services to deal with social and other problems that affect

school readiness."

And 22 percent say more opportunities to work with other teachers was the key.

► What would have helped prepare them for teaching? Rookies say that working with a skilled, experienced teacher would have been the greatest help.

Their next request: a year-long internship, named by 33 percent. Some 20 percent say an opportunity to work with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds would have been useful.

Of course, experience is the best teacher. So, after a year, here are Iowa teacher Dan Cox's tips for new teachers:

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Expect the unexpected.
- If your college or university does not require a course in classroom management, take one on your own.
- If you're hired early enough, get access to the textbooks and work on your lesson plans, it makes the transition easier.
- Find a mentor teacher to work with, they'll give you support every day because they want you to succeed.
- Don't be hard on yourself. And above all, enjoy your students and your colleagues.

—Anita Merina

For the full report, write to: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, The American Teacher Survey, P. O. Box 807, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Investors who want financial growth have started a movement back to the stock market. Should you jump on this bandwagon?

Back in the '80s, when interest rates were high, even long-term investors could put their money in fixed-income investments, earn a high return, and avoid the ups and downs of the stock market.

But those high rates were a historical anomaly. We didn't have them before, and we don't have them now. Today, as before 1981, borrowing money costs less—and putting money out at interest brings in less. Once again, there's a strong case for investing in stocks.

Those high interest rates of recent years didn't dive—they were pushed. Over the past year, the Federal Reserve Board has forced them down to encourage borrowing and so stimulate the wilting economy.

Low inflation and a weak economy prompt the Fed to reduce the rates it controls, such as the rate banks pay when they borrow from the Federal Reserve.

Such rate changes quickly translate into lower rates for short-term investments like certificates of deposit, bank money market accounts, money market mutual funds, and Treasury bills.

In the past year, these rates have fallen from above 7 percent to below 5 percent. Rates on tax-exempt money market funds have fallen to about 3.5 percent.

Although the Fed has less control over rates for long-term investments like mortgages and long-term bonds, these rates have also been inching down. This year the average rate on a 30-year mortgage has fallen from 9.83 percent to 9.05 percent. That's the lowest point since 1978, says HSH Associates, a New Jersey firm that tracks mortgage rates. And rates on 30-year Treasury bonds have dropped from 9.2 percent to 7.9 percent.

The fall in interest rates will probably drive many investors to hunt for more rewarding investments. But even when rates are high, a good portion of the money you invest for the long term (10 years or longer) should go into the stock market.

The pattern is clear. Over the past 60 years, stocks have returned an average of 10.2 percent a year, compared to 4.6 percent for government bonds and 3.7 percent for short-term investments like Treasury bills and money market funds, according to the Vanguard Group, a mutual fund company. Here are the 10-year averages for the Golden '80s: stocks, 17.5 percent return; government bonds, 12.6 percent; and money market funds, 9.0 percent.

Despite this evidence, many investors shy away from the stock market. They're afraid of making a disastrous mistake.

Total disaster is less likely if you turn to stock mutual funds: if one stock in the fund drops in value, others may rise. Still, the decision's not simple: more than 3,500 funds are available.

STOCK MUTUAL FUNDS:

ARE THEY FOR YOU?

Fortunately, you can quickly eliminate all but a manageable few of those possibilities. Here's how (assuming you're a fairly conservative investor).

Go to the library and ask for a copy of *Morningstar Mutual Funds*, a looseleaf reference book that lists 1,100 funds, giving each a rating of one to five stars. This is the best reference work available to consumers—and the most accessible.

If you can't find a copy in the library, you can get a trial subscription for \$55, which includes a complete set of ratings along with three months' updates. Morningstar is located at 53 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604 (312/427-1985).

Here's how to use the book:

► If you have a particular fund in mind, look it up. The handy one-page synopsis starts with a straightforward description of the fund. It will talk about

whether the fund seeks "capital appreciation"—growth of your principal—or income. You want a fund that seeks both.

A good balanced fund is likely to invest in preferred stocks and bonds as well as common stocks. And it's unlikely to use "leverage," a practice that allows the fund manager to borrow additional money to invest.

Consider this description of a fund called "Founders Special," an aggressive growth fund: "The fund engages in aggressive techniques, such as leveraging and short-term trading. It may invest up to 30 percent of assets in foreign stocks." If you are conservative, this is not for you.

► Look at the 10-year history (one of the description's most valuable sections), which shows the fund's performance in each of the past 10 years. You can see how volatile a fund is and compare its performance to that of the market as a whole, as measured by Standard & Poor's 500

Stock Index.

Take the fund called "44 Wall Street." It lost 58.62 percent in 1984 and followed that with losses of 20.13 in 1985, 16.26 in 1986, and 34.63 percent in 1987. To be fair, the fund got a new portfolio manager in 1988, but it still underperforms the market by a wide margin.

► Look at the fund's risk and return. For 44 Wall Street, the return is "low" and the risk "high." You want just the opposite. The rating for 44 Wall Street is one star, the lowest.

► Look at the expense ratio—the percentage of the fund's assets paid out in expenses each year. This is important because your return will be reduced by expenses. The average expense ratio for stock funds is about 1.3 percent. For 44 Wall Street, it's a whopping 9.3 percent.

Each *Morningstar* description includes a list of a fund's top holdings as well as a breakdown by industry or market sector and how that compares to the S & P 500. It also provides an analysis of the fund, including recent mistakes or shrewd moves. Finally, it notes the year the portfolio manager began managing the fund. You want a fund with a manager who's been there at least 10 years.

If you don't have a particular fund in mind, here's a short-cut method for finding one in *Morningstar*. Look for the list of funds by categories. The best kinds of funds for you are *balanced*, *equity income*, or *growth and income* funds.

Check the list of funds in these categories against the page that lists the five-star funds—about 70 of them.

► Eliminate those that charge a "load," or sales fee. There's no need to pay someone for advice when you're doing the research yourself.

► Eliminate those that invest in a particular sector like biotechnology or agriculture; they're not for beginners.

► Eliminate those without a 10-year record because they haven't proven themselves yet.

► Eliminate those that have changed managers in the last 10 years.

You'll have just a handful of funds left.

Look up each one of those and read the one-page synopsis (described above). Then call the fund's toll-free number and ask for a prospectus. Look up the fund's net asset value in the newspaper and watch it for a few weeks.

When you're ready to invest, call the fund company and ask if they'll waive the usual minimum purchase if you agree to invest a regular amount—say \$100—every month. You'll pay less on average for your shares by buying them at regular intervals regardless of whether the price is up or down. (The principle involved is called "dollar cost averaging.")

There's no magic formula for investing, and there are no guarantees. But, over time, stocks have outperformed all other investments. If you invest a little effort along with your money, you should be well served by a proven stock mutual fund.

—Mary Rowland

LOOKING AHEAD

Watch your wallet—more precisely, your pension. Some hard-pressed states looking for ways to make up for lost revenue are casting the evil eye on state educators' retirement systems.

States and localities have found several ways to use pension plans to balance their books—but at what price to the future?

They can, for instance, withhold or restructure employer contributions. Some states are fiddling with life expectancy projections and boosting their estimates of how much a pension fund will earn on its investment in the coming years. The resulting rosy figures become an excuse to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from their pension fund contributions—without reducing benefits.

Since 1985, 12 states, from Alaska to Pennsylvania, have delayed or simply not made scheduled contributions to pension plans. Fifteen have made structural changes that reduced their contributions.

In the short term, such strategies might brighten the budget picture, but in the long run, over-optimistic projections can lead to reduced flexibility, even financial disaster.

Most pension funds did well during the 1980s. Returns on stocks, bonds, and most other investments far outdistanced their historic norms. Computers helped balance risk against reward so funds could earn higher rates of return without taking big chances. By decade's end, some funds had two to four times the asset-to-benefits ratios considered mini-

Who's Spending Your Pension?

Your state may be balancing its books today with what you expected to live on tomorrow.

mally adequate.

Why not return this windfall to the taxpayer? No problem—as long as rates remain high. But most experts suspect that returns on investments in the '90s will lag far behind those of the '80s. Surely no one expects the Dow to triple in value again.

Some other reasons state pensions may not be as "over-funded" as they seem:

Inflation.

Although today's inflation rate is moderate, the double-digit rates of the late 1970s showed how

quickly inflation can heat up and how disastrous it is for retirees. Pension plans with a cushion of assets are flexible enough to make special cost-of-living adjustments in rough times.

Demographics. Baby Boomers, now aged 28 to 44, have yet to make an impact on retirement systems. Soon there'll be



many more retirees—and they'll retire younger and live to be older.

In 1900, the average American male spent just 3 percent of his adult life in retirement. Today, that figure is close to 30 percent.

Rising health care costs. Most public pension plans handle retiree health care on a "pay-as-you-go" basis.

NEA Research data suggest that unfunded liabilities of state and local government pension plans could total as much as \$230 billion right now. As health care costs continue to rise faster than inflation, this gap will widen.

One state in four has been tapping its retirement system by using plan assets to

promote state or local job growth, economic development, and other social and political goals.

For example, instead of spending tax dollars to help generate and preserve businesses, a state may encourage its pension plan administrators to create a venture capital fund for this purpose.

In 1989, 10 states endorsed the principle of "golden rule" investing, agreeing to invest their retirement system assets in one another's economies.

Proponents of local investing say a healthy economy, fueled by public pension money, will add to the tax base and create more jobs and benefits for public employees.

But local investing reduces benefit security if it creates a less diversified and riskier portfolio of assets.

Some funds may also direct their trustees to invest for social and political purposes.

Former NEA Vice-President Bernie Freitag, a Pennsylvania teacher, chairs the Pennsylvania Public School Employees Retirement System. Advises Freitag: "From Day One, make it your business to be interested in—and informed about—your state retirement system."

Your state Association stays informed about what the state has in mind for your pension fund. If the Association sounds the alarm, you can help by lobbying to protect your future.

For more information, write to NEA-Retired, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

EDUCATION MARKETPLACE

PUBLICATIONS

The Ten Commandments of Teaching: A Teacher's View

Ray Reyes

Ray Reyes left a promising career with the IRS to teach high school. Now he has written this new book that can help make you a better teacher, help you get more enjoyment out of your profession and your life, and serve as a handy reference on teaching fundamentals.

The Ten Commandments of Teaching is quite simply the most engaging, inspirational book about teaching that you will read this year. This no-nonsense approach to the teaching profession will delight both the beginner looking for a "game plan" and the veteran who wants to make teaching and the good life synonymous. Published November 1991. 64 pp. Price: \$8.95. Stock no. 1539-8-00-D.

Order from: NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 or call toll free (800) 229-4200.

EMPLOYMENT

National Job Network for teachers & principals. Contact NTC, Box 1257, Boston, MA 02118-1257, 617-267-3204.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS

Decision-Making Skills for Middle School Students. A quick reference book filled with ready to use activities and strategies for integrating decision-making skills into an integral part of your daily lessons. Send \$8.95 for stock # 1528-2-10-FC to NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516

Teachers Love It! Students really learn from it!

Order your copy today and use it in your classroom immediately: *Unfinished Stories for the Elementary Classroom*. Just send \$9.95 for this terrific book, stock # 1678-5-00-FC, to: NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Discounts on Resource Books. Join the NEA Professional Library Book Club and get discounts on K-12 resources. Just return each Book News reply card if you want an alternate book or none at all. Call or write: 1-800-525-6939, NEA Professional Library Book Club, 230 Livingston St., Northvale, NJ 07647.

MUSIC PROGRAM GUIDE

Music Directory of Summer Programs with addresses, brief descriptions. May copy for students and parents. Music Resources, 6716 Eastside Drive, Suite #4, Tacoma, WA 98422. \$8.00.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a New Challenge? The Honors Learning Center is looking for new franchisees.

Highly successful, individualized after-school programs for grades K-12. Comprehensive training, on-going support system, and proven track record!!! Investment of \$50,000 to \$85,000. Call 615-892-1800, Margaret Craft.

INSURANCE

Protect Your Valuables at home or at school with NEA Homeowners Insurance. Call 1-800-999-1030 for more information.

What's Better than Travel and Accident Insurance? NEA Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance covers your

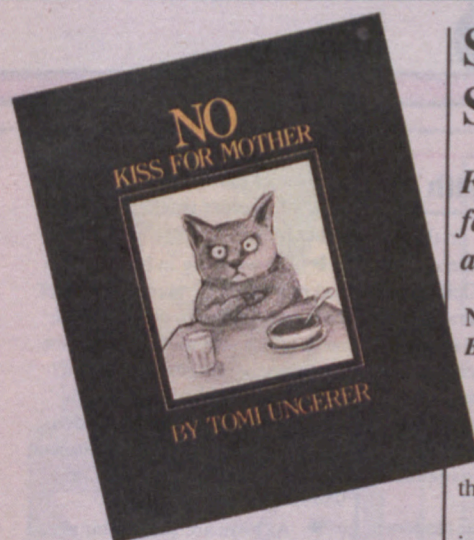
entire family for \$19 per year. And members cannot be turned down for coverage! Call 1-800-523-5877 to request an application.

FINANCIAL

If You Have the NEA MasterCard, the NEA Line of Credit can give you additional credit whenever and wherever you need it. Credit lines up to \$7,500 are available. Call 1-800-847-7378 to apply.

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BOOK BEAT



Something Old, Something New Something Borrowed, Nothing Blue

For holiday giving: an American classic reissued, the life story of a famous Mexican artist, an import about a fictional city, and a story about one tough kitty.

No Kiss for Mother
By Tomi Ungerer
Delacorte. 40 pp. \$13.

includes a Nazi-like soldier, whose armband has a question mark where the swastika would have been.

► *Lebek*, originally published in Italy, is done in the manner of a David Macaulay architectural book. Line drawings and text show a site—here a fictional Baltic or North Sea city—changing over time.

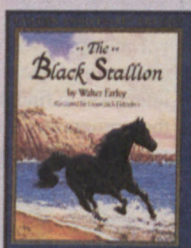
The story traces the site at the mouth of the river "Leb" from Bronze Age fishing village through Hanseatic trading center to modern port city.



Lebek: A City of Northern Europe Through the Ages
By Xavier Hernandez and Jordi Ballonga
Illustrated by Francesco Corni
Houghton Mifflin. 57 pp. \$16.95.

Francesco Corni's intricate cut-away drawings reveal the industrial technology—dry docks, for example—that has driven the area's economic development and the architectural styles that serve it.

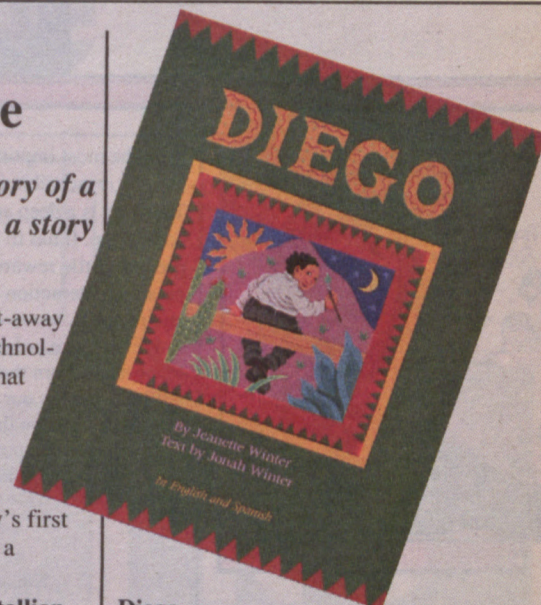
► *The Black Stallion*, published in 1941, was Walter Farley's first book. It's a shipwreck story with a



The Black Stallion
By Walter Farley
Illustrated by Domenick D'Andrea
Golden Anniversary Edition
Random House.
202 pp. \$15.

difference: wild stallion saves boy, boy saves stallion, and that's only the beginning.

Generations of kids have found the book compulsive reading. This 50th anniversary edition has new illustrations and snippets of interviews with the late author and members of his family.



Diego
By Jeanette Winter. Text by Jonah Winter
In English and Spanish
Knopf. 32 pp. \$12.

► *Diego* is a story of the life of famed Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. On each page, the very simple text appears in both English and Spanish.

Kids will enjoy finding the picture within a picture—it's Diego's first sketch of an event he's pictured as witnessing.

Jeanette Winter's exotic miniature paintings make the (mostly) Mexican settings irresistible.

—Nancy R. Needham
Book Review Editor

SOUNDING BOARD

History's Witness

On August 19, 1991, Michigan history teacher John Davidek was teaching conversational English to 11 Soviet citizens in Leningrad.

It was supposed to be a normal teaching day. But early that morning, I'd heard about a suspicious radio report claiming Gorbachev had become "ill while vacationing in the Crimea."

Later reports announced an "emergency committee" had been formed to "temporarily" take the leader's place.

I knew immediately that something was drastically wrong.

I dressed hurriedly and ran out of my flat. The walk to the Bolsheviki Metro Station seemed no different from the day before. Expressionless faces were everywhere. I searched for looks of panic and found none.

But my students—several of whom had filed papers for emigration to the United States—were full of fear. In preparation for leaving, they'd sold their apartments, automobiles, and most of their possessions. Now their chances of leaving Russia might be dashed forever.

As my students arrived, they provided

the latest news. I was told that there had, in fact, been a "putsch," and that most forms of communication had been restricted. Radio newscasters said a "Committee for the State of the Emergency" had taken charge.

We gathered at our meeting table in numbing silence—then quiet sobs filled the small, dusty room. I distinctly remember that every hand was occupied in some way; some clasped, some worriedly wrung together, some simply held by another set of hands.

One person spoke. Then we all talked, slowly and softly, about other recent repressions, other coups. A sense of foreboding and doom enveloped us.

At that point, someone entered the room with the news that the Leningrad city government was calling for a demonstration in the Palace Square.

Immediately the mood of the group changed. Somber tones were replaced by a clamor of hope and optimism.

Nevsky Prospekt, Leningrad's main thoroughfare, was alive that day. Thousands poured into Palace Square and clustered around the Alexander Column. Banners denouncing the coup appeared to dance defiantly in the wind.

The flurry of Russian flags reminded me of summer celebrations back home. As we joined the crowd streaming through the cobblestone streets, we were swept up into the wave of people.

The voices shouted, "Nyet junta...nyet junta," over and over again. This revered place of an earlier revolution was now overflowing with 200,000 people—none of whom had any idea what would happen next.

My students took my hand and encouraged me to get closer to the speakers with my camera. "We have an American who wants to take a picture of the mayor," said Nonna, one of my students. People stepped back and smiled their encouragement as we made our way to the front.

Leningrad Mayor Anatoly Soubchak urged the crowd to take a stand for democracy. The words shot like musket-fire into my American ears.

He told his listeners what they already knew: that the coup was illegal, the coup leaders criminals. These were dangerous words, yet they were spoken with a firmness that befitted a patriot speaking out for democracy.

Mayor Soubchak then spoke softly, reminding us to remain calm. He told us to return to work and support city authorities against the coup.

Our group drifted away from the front of the now disappearing masses. A young man scurried down from a lightpost near the Alexander Column and approached me (someone must have told him I was an American), proudly waving a tri-color czarist flag.

He handed me the flag, requesting in

heavily-accented English, "Take this flag back to America and give it to George Bush." I was struck by this gesture of kindness from one citizen who aspires to democracy, to another citizen of a democracy.

After he placed the flag in my hands, he removed a Leningrad pin from his lapel and pressed it into mine.

I walked away from the square with a profound new understanding of democracy. I didn't see tanks. I witnessed no bloodshed. What I saw was the courage of a people who would not accept another dark night of repression.

I saw a people who will forever be remembered for demonstrating to me, and to the world, the true meaning of freedom, bravery, and fortitude in the face of impossible odds.

This truth will be passed on to my students. Freedom's light will burn on.

Six hours after returning home, John Davidek was teaching history to his students at the Flint (Michigan) Southwestern Academy. He's a member of the United Teachers of Flint, an NEA affiliate.



Letters



Clothes Call

After reading "Dress Codes Uncovered in Schools" (Legal Times, November), I was moved to respond. When I was a student teacher in 1970, I was advised that the only acceptable criterion for not allowing some article of clothing was that it "interfered with the normal process of education." During my 20 years of teaching, this guideline has proved a very wise one indeed.

When I was a student, one of my junior high school teachers told our class we couldn't wear pink and black together because "only hoodlums dress like that," our entire class wore pink and black the next day. That was 1957.

It's been my experience that dress codes are often promoted by well-meaning adults, usually middle-aged, who don't like current styles. How would these same people feel if they were expected to wear a school uniform consisting of Nike shoes, Levi jeans, T-shirts or sweat shirts, and baseball caps?

The basic conflict seems to be who gets to choose what a student will wear. Should the choice be made by the students and their families? Or should the choice be made by a group of well-meaning, middle-aged adults?

If you want graduates who fit in at the expense of being able to make decisions for themselves, go with the latter.

Hal Manas
Knoxville, Tennessee

Claptrap Flap

The headline "Women in Education: How Far Can They Go?" (Human Rights, November) caught our attention. What in the world are you saying? We teachers fight this garbage every day and year of our lives.

Every teacher who spends more than five years in the classroom and isn't "promoted" to administration is suspected of incompetence. The public thinks that becoming an administrator is what bright, intelligent people do. And NEA, of all groups, comes right out and confesses that it believes the very same idiotic claptrap.

It's a fact of life that there's no promotion for teachers. We already

have the most important and awesomely responsible job there is. Teaching is a deep and personal conviction. It has to be, for there is precious little reward beyond the personal interaction with students and parents.

We've more or less accepted the low esteem from the general public, but what caught our attention is the blatant realization that we have no ally outside other practicing teachers. Even the mask of our own organization fell off!

Jerry Murray
Judith Murray
Kansas City, Missouri

Testing, Testing

I was struck by the incongruity of your November debate (Does the United States Need National Achievement Tests?). The "yes" advocate discussed a German school model. The "no" advocate addressed the input/output aspect of education.

I'm of the opinion that achievement test results are invalid because they don't identify faulty input. I also sometimes get the impression that poor output is perceived to result from lack of student effort and/or teacher competency.

But let's look at our situation. Most teachers I know can only dream of a computer in their classroom for their own use. Reality is a manual typewriter in the teacher's "work room," as if our classrooms aren't our place of work.

How many of us get textbooks when we need them? Can you imagine what it's like to have just 15 students in a class, with an amount of prep time equal to contact time. How about a phone to talk with parents?

The media are quick to tell us how far behind our students are compared to students in other countries. It would be immensely positive if NEA Today would inform us of how far

behind we are in inputs compared to other countries. What do you see when you look in the windows of classrooms in other countries? Priorities!

Henry Tyska
Plymouth, Michigan

More on MORE

I'm impressed and fascinated with Project MORE—the high school featured in "Lifestyles of the Clean & Sober" (cover story, October). I've spent a lot of time working with chemical abuse prevention and students in recovery.

I'm hoping you can send me the address of the school. I'm really interested in finding out more about their program. I'd like to see more programs like it so that students have a better chance of making it "clean & sober."

Wendy Mason
Costa Mesa, California
For more information, write to Lifestyles, Project MORE High School, 440 S. Park Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719.

Marshall's Message

You forgot one of Thurgood Marshall's greatest achievements in education (Human Rights, October). With his consistent support of nearly unrestricted abortion he helped prevent overcrowding in the classroom. Just think of the havoc that would have been created if all of those millions of aborted babies had been allowed to be born and eventually to clog the school systems of our country.

Let us all thank Justice Marshall for this great educational stand. If you made it out of your mothers' womb, Thurgood Marshall was on your side. That first part was a little tricky, however.

Robert P. Hales
Chandler, Arizona

Nursed to Health

I want to congratulate you on the well-written article about the role of the school nurse (Health, October). Your questions gave Barbara Ward the opportunity to tell a great deal about what school nurses can do for children, staffs, and parents—when the nurse-to-pupil ratios are favorable. As a California school nurse, I'm awed by New Hampshire's impressive 1:450 ratio!

Thanks for showing your readers a model we should emulate.

Kit Dreyfuss
Santa Monica, California

Last, Not Least

I enjoyed with a chuckle the note at the bottom of your chart, "Public Schools Enroll 41.5 Million" (State-side, October). It says, "Because of rounding, details may not add to totals." Somehow your "rounding" completely eliminated the State of Wyoming and its details.

Patricia Conklin
Sheridan, Wyoming

Ed Note: Here are the enrollment figures for Wyoming. The Cowboy state enrolled 100,000 public school students in 1981, 94,000 in 1991. Sorry for the omission.

In Our Own Backyard

The recent attention paid to the issue of sexual harassment made me contemplate what efforts we, as teachers, can make to strengthen the self-esteem of our female students. Here are questions to ask ourselves:

► Do we assign, equally, those tasks that children view as status jobs, i.e., opening windows, moving supplies, assisting with the film projector and bus drills?

I've observed teachers who gave

these jobs only to boys, perhaps because of the subtle conditioning most of us older teachers have undergone.

► Do we bring in information and require study about women of accomplishment to establish role models and provide some balance to our social studies curriculum?

An excellent source for such materials, (free catalog provided): National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492-8518.

► As boys are usually far ahead of girls in sports skills, do we structure our physical education programs so girls have a chance to practice skills, gain ground, and compete?

► In speeches and in drama productions, do we seek strong roles for girls?

► Do we encourage girls to speak up in discussions and take the initiative in problem-solving?

► Do we refer to the males on our faculties as "men" and the females as "girls"? This is called "infantilization of women" in psychological terms.

► Finally, do we encourage discussions that will help students of both genders understand the background and changes in our country regarding women?

A heightened awareness of our actions and a relatively small investment in our lesson planning may reap a large gain.

Leonora Fishbach
Long Beach, California

Your Liability Benefits

The "Summary Plan Description" of the Educators Employment Liability (EEL) Program that was included in previous issues of NEA Today indicated that this NEA program was covered by the Federal Employees Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The United States Department of Labor recently issued an opinion to the contrary. This opinion simply means that the EEL Program is not subject to federal regulation, and will have no effect on the benefits provided by the Program or on its operating procedures.

The EEL Program insurance policy will continue to be filed with and approved by the insurance departments of all 50 states each year.

For further information about the Department of Labor's opinion, contact EEL Program, NEA Office of Legal Services Programs, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For a copy of the EEL Program brochure for your state, contact your state or local Association.



Debate



YES

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all teenagers could experience the freedom of youth unencumbered by adult responsibilities?

Then everyone's teenage years would be a time to mature emotionally as well as physically. They'd be a time devoted to education, a time for gaining a better understanding of the demands of the world that faces young people.

Unfortunately, this isn't the case. In Ohio alone, we have nearly 10,000 teen parents who receive public assistance and aren't graduating from high school or earning a high school equivalency diploma (GED).

LEAP (Learning, Earning, And Parenting) is trying to change that. It's a state program that encourages students who are parents to stay in school.

All but a few of the LEAP participants are girls, reflecting one of the major causes of our nation's high dropout rate among girls—teenage pregnancy.

Here's how it works. Any teen parent who provides proof of enrollment in school is eligible for a \$62 enrollment bonus.

A teenager who continues to meet the LEAP Program's minimum school attendance requirements will receive an attendance bonus of \$62 a month added into the regular AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) grant.

However, if the student is absent from school more than two full days without good cause, the AFDC grant is reduced by \$62.

At South High School, I work with pregnant teenagers through a program called GRADS (Graduation Reality and Dual Role Skills). I also work with a LEAP case worker to help teen parents on welfare finish their education.

Most of them come from rough neighborhoods and single-parent homes. They're poor and have few role models. It's hard for them to see a future beyond their daily existence.

Our LEAP caseworker does more than count absences. She finds out why students are absent and searches for a way to keep them coming to class.

Should Students Be Paid For Showing Up?

Barbara Neely has taught for the last 12 years at Columbus (Ohio) South High School. A home economics teacher, Neely now teaches Graduation Reality and Dual Role Skills (GRADS), a program for teen parents.

Many of their stories are sad. One of our students was kicked out of her house by her mother. After a brief stint in a foster home, she and her baby moved in with her father. But the father drank heavily. The young girl ended up on the porch with no money and no one to help her.

Throughout this ordeal, she tried to come to school. Because she was eligible for LEAP, her caseworker helped her find a stable foster home.

If there hadn't been a LEAP program, the school would have marked her an absentee and eventually a dropout. She would have had no incentive to re-enroll in school.

Teen parents are all too likely to become dependent on welfare for years on end. Staying in school gives them a way to learn the necessary skills for a brighter future. It gives them a chance to earn a living for themselves and their children.

Teen parents who drop out are more likely to have babies than those who stay in school. Dropping out also means that many will never have the opportunity to develop good parenting skills.

There's a critical need for programs like LEAP. According to the Children's Defense Fund, an American child dropped out of school every eight seconds of the 1987-88 school year. Every 60 seconds of that year, an American teenager had a baby—a total of 472,623 kids. You can imagine what the figures have risen to now.

School attendance is a way for teen parents to learn the skills to become self-disciplined, self-sufficient, and productive citizens. The LEAP program, supported by Ohio's Department of Education, helps them do that.

Through the program, society says, "We know how hard it is to come to school, but it's worth it, and we can help."

The \$62 a month that LEAP provides isn't a handout—it's a means of helping these children develop their full potential—in the job market, as parents, and as contributing citizens in their respective communities.

Louis Dacey teaches ninth grade world history at Red Bank Regional High School in Little Silver, New Jersey. He's a 30-year classroom veteran and long-time activist with the Red Bank Teachers Association.

Paying students to come to school is a bad idea. Why? Because it turns the pursuit of knowledge into the pursuit of money.

Where's the incentive to work hard in the classroom, to go beyond what's assigned and into the world of discovery, if merely showing up every day brings a financial reward?

A program at our school gives certain students \$5 a day for good attendance, punctuality, and reasonably good behavior. Other schools in the state, and probably across the country, do the same thing.

Are financial rewards really going to get these kids motivated to learn? I don't think so. I doubt that these programs will do much more than get students to punch in on the school time clock.

Let me give an example I use in my world history class: the mercenary soldier. This soldier will fight for anyone as long as the price is right. One year he might fight for one side, the next year for the other. It doesn't matter as long as he's being paid.

But when the going gets tough, these soldiers would quit in a moment. Being paid to fight is not the same as fighting for yourself or for your country.

By the same token, giving students money for good attendance, better grades, or good behavior doesn't motivate them to learn. They'll attend for the money but not for themselves or their community.

And what if the money were suddenly taken away, do you think they'd keep coming to class anyway? Unfortunately, I don't think so.

Coming to school is a privilege. Our students are already being paid—by receiving a free education in the public schools, courtesy of the taxpayer. In return, students have a responsibility to do their best.

Students should see education as a way to get more out of life, and as preparation for the working world.

Employers want more from their employees than punctuality. If you consider that, you'd see that financial incentives would be counterproductive.



NO

When students leave school, they can't expect to be paid for doing just the minimum. They'll be competing with young adults who may be considerably more skilled and motivated than they are. In the marketplace, jobs go to the workers with the best preparation.

Today's employers are already critical of our high school graduates. They've watched the balance of power among industrialized countries shift away from the United States toward Germany, Japan, and smaller countries.

We need to assure society that our students have the qualities to carry our nation forward—a keen intellect, commitment to the work ethic, a fair but competitive attitude, and the drive to excel.

Why use special programs and financial incentives for students when teaching simple, traditional values will do? Most often, students qualifying for the programs are the ones who would benefit most from learning a work ethic.

What happens instead is that students realize that following instructions minimally is good enough. Where's the reward in working any harder?

We're also sending mixed messages to our kids when we promote programs that pay students for attending classes. Right now, there's a bill pending in the New Jersey senate making unpaid community service a graduation requirement.

Where's the fairness in requiring all students to do volunteer work in order to graduate if some students receive money for merely showing up at school?

Might students look at this and say we're setting a double standard in our schools? If they do, how will we answer them?

The real reward for students should be the excitement of learning. That's what we want to give each student who enters our classroom.

Reducing that excitement to dollars and cents takes the joy out of teaching. And paying students to attend school doesn't guarantee that the student will be able to make a living later on.

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